Hellenic Religion and Christianization c. 370–529
Volume 2

Hellenic Religion and Christianization c. 370–529

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By

Frank R. Trombley

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There is one god, greatest among gods and men,
who is like mortals neither in bodily shape nor in thought.

Xenophanes of Colophon, Fr. 23
(6th c. B.C.)

The abode of *daimones* has become the house of God.
The light of salvation shines where darkness caused concealment.
Where sacrifices to idols occurred, now there are choirs of angels.
Where God was provoked, now he is propitiated.

Inscription on the *martyrion*
of St. George, Zorava
(515 A.D.)

For
Elizabeth
my daughter
with
love

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PREFACE

This volume completes the discussion of Hellenic religion and Christianization begun in Part I of this work. Part II is in many respects a separate and entirely different work, as it makes very extensive use of the epigraphy to give the problem of Christianization a demographic dimension. Elsewhere, the more or less proven methods of internal criticism of texts were employed, and these sections of the book require little comment here. It should be added that the greater part of Part II deals with conditions in the countryside in a very detailed way. This, too, differentiates it from Part I, which had a pronounced emphasis on the urban forms of late Hellenic religion.

Northern Syria was by far the easiest district to treat, because the inscriptions and architecture have been thoroughly studied in the volumes of the Princeton University expeditions of 1899, 1904–5, and 1909. Here it was possible to be very precise on all points because of the common local practice of dating inscriptions by the Antiochene or Seleucid eras. Georges Tchalenko's survey of the material and economic life of the Limestone Massif gave the study greater coherence than might otherwise have been attainable. Greater problems attended the chapter on the Bostrene, Djebel Hauran, and Ledjā because many of the inscriptions are available only in Waddington's edition of 1870, which is sound but requires updating. The number of dated inscriptions is much smaller here. For Asia Minor, it was not possible to produce an exhaustive survey of the epigraphic evidence. Little of it is dated. This, coupled with the multiplicity of editors and disparate editions, has caused me to prefer more of a thematic treatment of certain restricted areas of Phrygia that became Christian between c. 375–450. These sections are illustrative rather than comprehensive, but provide an important comparative model for what is said about Syria and Arabia. I have generally retained the names of sites as transliterated in the respective epigraphic collections, except in the case of well-known sites like Umm el-Jimal (rather than E. Littmann's Umm idj-Djimāl). This is intended as a convenience for non-orientalist scholars.

Some few new works have come to my attention since the text and major propositions of this volume were largely codified. I note them here because each in its own way touches upon questions of relevance to Parts I and II of this work. First, there is K.W. Harl, "Sacrifice and Pagan Belief in Fifth- and Sixth-Century Byzantium," *Past and Present* 128 (1990) 7–27, an admirable summary of many of the issues and problems discussed in the present work. Secondly, there is M. Tardieu, *Les Paysages reliques: routes et haltes syriennes d'Isidore à Simplicius* (Paris-Louvain: 1990). The implication of the book that Simplicius went to Ḥarrān in Osrhoene is perhaps important for understanding the transmission of Greek philosophy into Islamic culture. Thirdly, there is Pierre Chuvin, *Chronique des derniers païens: la disparition du paganisme dans l'Empire romaine, du règne de Constantin à celui de Justinien* (Paris: 1991). Chuvin's work needs to be read in the French edition, of which pp. 155–275 were not included in the recent English translation. All these works illuminate themes developed in the present study. The points of emphasis are sometimes a bit different, but the conclusions are generally consistent.

Some sections of this volume go back (literally) to the first days of writing back in 1987. The words of thanks indicated in Part I apply equally here, but I would also like to thank Ms. Evelyn Cornell, the adviser to Humanities readers at King's College London, and her staff, for their immensely patient assistance. I would like to thank Dr. Irene Vaslef, the head librarian at Dumbarton Oaks, in equal measure.

I must repeat my thanks to Averil Cameron for having read two of the chapters herein, and to Andrew Dyck for one other, and also to Julian Deahl, Senior Editor at E.J. Brill, whose patient cooperation made the final work on this all quite painless. *Ex consuetudine* I claim credit for any errors that might have crept in. The chapters on northern Syria benefited immensely from the Workshop on Late Antiquity that met under Averil Cameron's sponsorship at the School of Oriental and African Studies at London in late April 1991, and from a rather frank communication of Susan A. Harvey. My thanks also go to Professor Han Drijvers of Groningen, one of the editors of the Brill series, whose timely criticism saved me from a number of errors. Professor Jacob Neusner also deserves a word of thanks for having introduced me to rabbinic texts at the NEH Seminar at Brown University in 1988. It was Michael Morony who suggested a brief treatment of the Safaitic inscriptions, but it was I who elected to limit the discussion to a single site, il-ʿIsāwi. Michael Braunlin of the Modern Greek Library, University of Cincinnati, procured books for me, sometimes by sleight of hand, during my occasional visits there. I doubt that the problem of the

Greek *paideia* and Christian sophistic would have occupied such a prominent place throughout this volume, had not Speros Vryonis reflected several times during my early days as a student on Werner Jaeger's greatness as a scholar.

Finally, I have benefited from the personal and professional support of many colleagues and friends νυκτὸς ἀμολγῷ. I am thinking particularly of Speros Vryonis, Jr., and of Bill McLoughlin, O.S.M., Madeleine Cody, and Maria Vaiou, a small group, but a good one.

London,
23 August 1992

Additional note: I have retained all solecisms of spelling and grammar in the Greek inscriptions quoted.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAES	*Publications of an American Archaeological Expedition to Syria in 1899, Part II: Architecture and Other Arts*, ed. Howard C. Butler (New York 1903). *Part III: Greek and Latin Inscriptions*, ed. W.K. Prentice (New York 1908).
AS	*Anatolian Studies*
Bernand	Etienne Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques et latines de Philae II: Haut et Bas Empire* (Paris 1969).
BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
CAH 12	*The Cambridge Ancient History XII: The Imperial Crisis and Recovery A.D. 193–324*. Ed. N.H. Baynes *et al.* (Cambridge 1939).
CSCO	*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* (Louvain 1903–)
CIG 4	*Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*. Ed. A. Boeck 1–4 (Berlin 1828–77.
DACL	*Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*. Ed. F. Cabrol & H. Leclercq (Paris 1903–50).
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
EA	*Epigraphica Anatolica*
GOTR	*Greek Orthodox Theological Review*
Griffith	Francis Ll. Griffith. *Catalogue of the Demotic Graffiti of the Dodecaschoenus* (Oxford 1937).
HGM	*Historici Graeci Minores* 1–2 (Leipzig 1870–71).
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae* 1–14. Ed. A. Kirchhoff (Berlin 1873–90).
IGC-As.Min.	*Recueil des inscriptions grecques chrétiennes d'Asie mineure*. Ed. H. Grégoire (Paris 1922).
IGLS	*Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*. Ed. L. Jalabert, R. Mouterde, *et al.* 1–7 (Paris 1929–70).
ILCV	*Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres*. Ed. E. Diehl 1–3 (Berlin 1925–31).
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JOB	*Johrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik.*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies.*
Lassus	*Inventaire archéologique de la région au nord-est de Hama*. Ed. J. Lassus 1–2 (Damascus 1936).
MAMA	*Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua* 1–6 (Manchester 1928–39).
ODB	*Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. Ed. Alexander Kazhdan *et al.* 1–3 (Oxford-New York 1991).
OGIS	*Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*. Ed. W. Dittenberger 1–2 (Leipzig 1903–5).
PAES II	*Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904–5 and 1909, Division II: Architecture, Section A: Southern Syria* and *Section B: Northern Syria*. Ed. Howard C. Butler (Leiden 1919 and 1920).
PAES III	*Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904–5 and 1909, Division III: Greek and Latin Inscriptions, Section A: Southern Syria*. Ed. E. Littmann, D. Magie, and D.R. Stuart (Leiden 1921); *Section B: Northern Syria*. ed. W.K. Prentice (Leiden 1922).
PAES IV	*Publications of the Princeton University Arhaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904–5 and 1909, Division IV: Semitic Inscriptions*. Ed.

	Enno Littmann. *Section A: Nabataean Inscriptions from the Southern Haurân* (Leiden 1914); *Section B: Syriac Inscriptions* (Leiden 1934); *Section C: Safaitic Inscriptions* (Leiden 1943).
PG	*Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, Series Graeco-latina. Ed. J.P. Migne (Paris 1857–).
PL	*Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, Series Latina. Ed. J.P. Migne (Paris 1884–).
PO	*Patrologia Orientalis*. Ed. R. Graffin & F. Nau (Paris 1903–).
P. Oxy.	*Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. Ed. B.P. Grenfell & A.S. Hunt (London 1898–).
RHR	*Revue de l'histoire des religions*
Roueché	Charlotte Roueché. *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity* (London 1989).
SEG	*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*. Ed. P. Roussel *et alii* (London 1923–).
Waddington	*Recueil des inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*. Ed. W.H. Waddington (Paris 1870).

CHAPTER FIVE

THE *PHILOPONOI* OF ALEXANDRIA AND HELLENIC RELIGION

The biography of Severus, the monophysite patriarch of Antioch (512–518), contains detailed reports about Hellenic religion in the milieu of the intellectual elites in the cities of the Eastern Roman Empire c. 485–500.[1] The author, a straightforward historian called Zachariah, a *scholastikos* or barrister from Gaza in First Palestine, also wrote the semi-fictional dialogue of a debate between a Hellene and a Christian *philoponos* of Berytus on the creation of the world.[2] He was an intellectually sober product of the Alexandrian rhetorical schools, later matriculating to the imperial law school at Berytus. Zachariah knew Severus personally, and relates his story with intense psychological insight. The author evinces a healthy contempt for miracles, citing only the fraudulent stories of that genre told by Hellenes. These he debunks with rationalistic fervor. Zachariah belonged to the zealous Christian group called the *philoponoi*.[3] The association consisted of Alexandrian laymen, many of them professors and students, who undertook various church duties and even nursed the sick. Their favorite task was monitoring the activities of the pagan professors for sacrifice and other cult practices. The *philoponoi* also opposed the anti-Christian polemic of rhetors like the younger Horapollon. Many students, like Severus himself, had yet to receive Christian baptism, being catechumens, and often wavered between Hellenic religion and Christianity.

To judge from Zachariah's statements, the *philoponoi* achieved many conversions in this milieu of Greek *paideia* and Hellenic faith. His narrative is restricted mainly to personal friends, but encompasses events at Berytus and Aphrodisias as well. One must first consider the social background of the students in Zachariah's milieu and analyse their relations with the Hellenes on the teaching faculty. The status and characteristics of the Hellenic cults in late fifth-century Alexandria will emerge from this inquiry, as will the legal measures taken for their suppression. Events further afield at Aphrodisias and Berytus figure in this scheme as well.

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[1] Zacharie le Scholastique, *Vie de Sévère*, ed. tr. M.-A. Kugener, *Patrologia Orientalis* 2/1 (Paris 1903), 7–115. For emendations, cf. E.W. Brooks, "The Life of Severus," *Journal of Theological Studies* 5 (1904), 369f.

[2] Zachariah of Mytilene, *Disputatio de Mundi Opificio*, PG 85, 1011–1144. Anton Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn 1922), 183f. Of late, one hears of a pseudo-Zachariah. Susan A. Harvey, *Asceticism and Society in Crisis: John of Ephesus and the Lives of the Eastern Saints* (Berkeley 1990), 185, n. 23.

[3] Cf. the text references collected under this rubric in G.W. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford 1961), 1480.

I. The Social Background of Zachariah of Mytilene's Friends

The students of rhetoric in Alexandria, like those studying philosophy at Athens, came from wealthy social backgrounds, a fact that emerges clearly from Zachariah's biography of Severus. His account provides decisive evidence as to how the younger scions of these families accepted Christianity.

The chief protagonist of the story, Severus himself, accepted baptism well after he had completed his education in Alexandria and had gone on to the imperial law school at Berytus. Severus came from a Christian decurion family residing at Sozopolis in Pisidia.[4] His father belonged to the city council and an uncle, his namesake, had been bishop of Sozopolis at the time of the Council of Ephesus in 431.[5] The family estates financed his education and that of his two brothers in Alexandria. It consisted of the traditional *paideia* in both Greek and Latin rhetoric.[6] Severus remained a catechumen, observing the common but now dying custom of postponing baptism except in case of life-threatening illness.[7] Despite this, he and his brothers kept company with several *philoponoi*: the Christian sophist John Semeiographos, the Christian rhetorician Sopater, a certain Menas who looked after the poor, and Zachariah himself.[8] The latter suggested to Severus, who liked to imitate the speeches of the Antiochene orator Libanius, that he compare these texts with the rhetoric, doctrine, and philosophy found in the writings of Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus. Severus became the literary disciple of the Cappadocians after carefully comparing the letters exchanged between Basil and Libanius.[9] Other Christian rhetors working in the cities of the

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[4] Zachariah refers to his family as "distinguished", the Greek word being *axiologos* or more probably *lamprotatos*. Zachariah, *V. Severi* 11, n. 4.

[5] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 11.

[6] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 11.

[7] The parallel case of Augustine of Hippo is instructive. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 106f.

[8] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 11f.

[9] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 12f.

Roman East certainly used this method to wean catechumens and even pagan scholars away from the *paideia.*

Severus remained a Christian fellow-traveller for the time being. Zachariah admits candidly that later on, during Severus' legal studies at Berytus, he was caught red-handed offering pagan sacrifice.[10] Zachariah can hardly have exaggerated an act so discreditable to his protagonist. The circles in which they moved, the society of lawyers with Hellenic education, freely forgave such acts of youthful experimentation. Severus began to pursue studies of Christian literature intensely only after the completion of the law curriculum. Under the influence of his friends, led by a certain Evagrius, he agreed to accept formal instruction and become a monk, the decision coming during a visit with his friends to the martyrion of St. Leontius in Phoenician Tripoli.[11] Fraternal affection provided the impetus for the conversion of the intellectuals much as geniality and forebearance of rural custom enabled monks to carry out the less intellectually articulated work of converting the countryside during this same time.[12]

Zachariah gives a biographical sketch of another student of rhetoric called Paralios reflecting personal acquaintance and rare psychological insight. Paralios came from Aphrodisias, the metropolis or provincial capital of Caria. His parents had some wealth and probably belonged to the city council, for they had the funds to send him to study rhetoric in Alexandria and his older brother Athanasius to the law studium at Berytus. The family was pagan.[13] Paralios had three brothers in all, two of them pagan, who in Zachariah's phrase had "abandoned themselves to idolatry and appeased evil *daimones* with invocations, sacrifices, incantations, and by the tricks of magicians."[14] These rituals and prayers cannot have differed much from those used by Proclus at this time in Athens. Paralios' third and elder brother Athanasius, although raised a pagan, had after completing his legal studies at Berytus converted to Christianity during a visit to Alexandria, where he fell in with a Christian sophist called Stephen. Athanasius ended up in the monastery of Enaton, where the charismatic Solomon then presided as hegumen.[15]

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[10] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 9.

[11] The torrent of tears that accompanied Severus' conversion bears some resemblance to the experience of Augustine. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 108.

[12] Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 352 and passim.

[13] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 14f.

[14] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 14.

[15] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 14f.

The family found itself in this state, with three pagan sons and one Christian, when Paralios (still a pagan) arrived in Alexandria to begin his studies. Family divisions of this kind were common in the fifth century. Hypatius, hegumen of Rufinianae in Bithynia, encountered a similar case of three brothers residing in Constantinople.[16] In Paralios' case, family relations had become embittered. Upon his departure for Alexandria, his pagan brothers had urged him not to make contact with Athanasius.[17] Their fears were justified, for Paralios at length accepted Christian baptism after talks with Athanasius, the monks of Enaton, the *philoponoi*, and Zachariah himself.[18] Zachariah mentions many other conversions, including that of Urbanus, a professor of Latin grammar who eventually migrated to Constantinople.[19]

II. Relations among Pagan and Christian Professors and Their Students: Paralios of Aphrodisias

Considering the Neoplatonist Proclus' long life of Hellenic belief and ritual in Athens, it is hardly surprising to find Hellenes of a similar sort in other university towns like Alexandria. The two cities differed, however, in one important respect. Alexandria, unlike Athens, had a large and vociferous population of monks both within and outside the city walls. Patriarchs like Theophilus (385–412), the destroyer of the Serapeum in 391, got along well with the monks and roused the Christian populace against the Hellenes with ease. Their demagogic successes were celebrated in popular legend and even art.[20]

Paralios of Aphrodisias began his studies with the younger Horapollon, a pagan grammarian "full of admiration for *daimones* and magic."[21] The latter conducted sacrifices in front of images, even inviting Paralios to join him in these rites. Both Christian and pagan sophists at Alexandria attended to the spiritual, or as it were, "daimonic" welfare of their students, working to build up a spirit of camaraderie based not only on a personality cult of the professor, but also on the religious issue. It is probable that other favored students besides Paralios took part in the secret rites. Paralios became alienated from Horapollon and his student colleagues after a visit to his brother Athanasius at the Enaton monastery. Their meeting ended with Athanasius' friend the monk Stephen making a diatribe against Hellenic religion:[22]

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[16] Infra, Ch. VII, Sect. 1.

[17] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 15.

[18] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 37.

[19] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 37.

[20] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 3.

[21] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 15. On this, see the recent discussion of Pierre Chuvin, *A Chronicle of the Last Pagans*, tr. B.A. Archer (Cambridge, Mass. 1990), 106–111. It contains certain details omitted here, but my own analysis follows a different direction.

> After reading many treatises of the church fathers who had opposed the Hellenes, [Stephen] received grace from God to defeat them utterly in his debates with them. . . . He refuted the sophistic objections made by the Hellenes against Christians. Then he retorted against the offenses of the pagans to Paralios: the infamous mysteries of their gods, the dream-oracles of polytheism, the obscure and embarrassed responses of these gods, their ignorance of the future, and other frauds of those same *daimones*. Stephen persuaded Paralios to submit his doubts to Horapollon, Heraiskos, Asklepiodotos, Ammonius, Isidore, and the other philosophers close to them, giving just weight to what each side [of the controversy] said. Paralios engaged in conversations with the pagans many days thereafter. He found their responses weak and without foundation.

The resulting counter-arguments of Paralios' professors, some of them prominent enough philosophers and theurgists to rate mention in Damascius' *Life of Isidore*, sounded quite compelling to Paralios' unformed mind, perhaps more than Zachariah could freely admit. Not much literature on the pagan-Christian dialogue has survived from this period. It consists of one-sided attacks in Nilus of Ankyra's letters (ob. c. 430), the sermons of bishops like Asterius of Amasea (ob. 410), the *Therapeutic for Hellenic Maladies* of Theodoret of Cyrrhus (ob. 458), the dialogue *Theophrastus* written by Aeneas of Gaza (ob. 518), and the dialogue *On the Creation of the World* of Zachariah of Mytilene (ob. ante 553).[23] The set-piece compilation of questions and answers between a Christian and a Hellene appearing under the authorship of the pseudo-Justin perhaps bears the closest resemblance to the set of arguments pumped into Paralios' head by Stephen the monk.[24]

A temple of Isis stood in the village-town of Menouthis some fourteen miles northeast of Alexandria, not far from Canopus.[25] Although closed and partially dismantled in the year immediately following the demolition of the Serapeum in 391, when the

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[22] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 16.

[23] Nilos of Ankyra, *Epistolae*, PG 79, 81–582. Asterius of Amasea, *Sermo adversus Kalendarum Festum*, PG 40, 215–226. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Graecarum Affectionum Curatio*, ed. Ioannes Raeder (Leipzig 1904). Aeneas of Gaza, *Theophrastus*, PG 85, 872–1004.

[24] Pseudo-Justin, *Quaestiones et Responsiones ad Orthodoxos*, PG 6, 1249–1490.

[25] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 17.

Tabennesiote monks took over its country estates, the Isis temple of Menouthis remained in use for clandestine sacrifices and incubation rites under the supervision of a local pagan priest. Paralios became involved in this cult as a result of his debates with Horapollon and other pagan philosophers of the Alexandrian schools, who cited a recent miracle supposedly wrought by Isis as proof of the efficacy of the old cults.

Asklepiodotos, a pagan philosopher teaching in Alexandria, had married the daughter of another Asklepiodotos, a city councillor of great repute then living at Aphrodisias in Caria, Paralios' home town.[26] When the marriage proved infertile, the younger Asklepiodotos got permission from his father-in-law to remove his wife to the Isis temple at Menouthis and incubate with her in the hope of producing offspring through the agency of Isis, the fertility deity thought to assist the Nile flood.[27] Zachariah tells the story with irony:[28]

> Asklepiodotos stayed the specified time at Menouthis offering many sacrifices to the *daimones*, but this availed him nothing. The infertility of his wife persisted even then. After imagining that he saw Isis sitting next to him in a dream, the dream-interpreters in that place who served the *daimon* represented by Isis declared that he should have intercourse with the stone that represented Isis and, after the stone, have intercourse with his wife. She remained sterile in spite of this. At length, the priest counselled him to go alone with his wife to the village of Asty, to live there for an appropriate period of time, and then to take an infant for his son born a short time before to the priestess, who was a member of the priest's family. "For the gods and the fates," the priest said grandiloquently, "wished that he do this." Asklepiodotos followed this advice and took his wife alone to the house of the infant's mother. He gave her a sum of money and took

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[26] Infra, Ch. V, Sect. 4, and Ch. VI, passim.

[27] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 16f.

[28] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 18f. The Isis of Menouthis is attested in a tablet produced c. 200 A.D. and found in Rome. It reads: "To Isis Pharia. [X. made an offering] to the Isis in Menouthis in behalf of the safety (*sōteria*) of our lord the emperor Antoninus." *Sylloge Inscriptionum Religionis Isiacae et Sarapiacae*, ed. Ladislaus Vidman (Berlin 1969), no. 403. Hereinafter cited as *SIRIS*. Another inscription at Rome mentions a cult effigy: "The image of the most holy god Sarapis with the Isis in Menouthis." *SIRIS* 556a. This particular image (*to xoanon*) was perhaps modelled on the prototype that the younger Asklepiodotus and Paralios saw in the 480's. One last inscription (c. 200 A.D.) certifies the Mediterranean-wide fame of the Menouthis cults: "For good luck. I Statius Kodratus, the most excellent temple warden (*neōkoros*), made an offering to Zeus Helios Sarapis and to the gods housed in the same temple (*theoi synnaoi*), as I have often been saved from great perils and wish to give thanks. . . . Dioskoros the temple warden of the great Sarapis made an offering to the god in Menouthis with the small altar (*to bōmiskarion*)." *SIRIS* 406.

> the child. He then returned to Alexandria, boasting that his infertile wife had given birth after all that time. As a result, all those who used to indulge in the foolishness of the Hellenes gloried in the tale as if it were the truth. They praised Isis and Menouthis, the goddess' village, where someone would have done better to bury the Isis temple under the sand so deeply that no one should ever find the slightest trace.

The story came to Paralios' attention during religious discussions with Horapollon, Asklepiodotos, and other pagan scholars, who cited this "miraculous" birth as proof of pagan miracles. Paralios credulously accepted the tale and laid it before Athanasius and Stephen at Enaton. Stephen demolished Paralios' naivete with logical argument:[29]

> An infertile woman who has given birth to a child should also have breast milk. Let the Hellenes assure themselves about the matter through the mediation of some chaste and honest woman of a distinguished Alexandrian family. She will see the milk, confirm the prodigy and miracle, and so the daughter of a titled official [the elder Asklepiodotos] and wife of a philosopher [the younger Asklepiodotos] will not have to go about with the air of an outraged woman.

The *philoponoi* seem to have applied the same stringent and rationalistic principles of proof to claims of Christian miracles as well. When Paralios confronted the Hellenes of his faculty with this argument, they replied:[30]

> You have the audacity [to demand] the impossible! To think that you should persuade men unshakeably attached to the truth who would not even dream of such things! (Lacuna) . . . as a result Paralios drew back from the Hellenes' doctrines.

Exchanges of this sort, which questioned the ontological reality of pagan divination, theurgy, and miracles, must have converted many students to Christianity in late fifth-century Alexandria.

Paralios decided to test the empirical reality of the supposed dream-visions of Isis at Menouthis, particularly as he belonged to an age group in which religious experimentation was common. The experience proved to be frightening:[31]

> When he was at Menouthis, he saw Isis, or rather the evil spirit (*shād*) which represents this goddess. She told him in a dream: "Be on your guard against a certain man, because he is a sorcerer." Paralios kept

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[29] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 19.

[30] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 19f.

[31] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 20. This passage is far from clear as to meaning. I fear something may have fallen out of the text in the process of transmission.

> at the matter [with the goddess. He learned that this sorcerer] had come [to Alexandria] to study grammar, which he was studying with the same teacher [Horapollon]. [The student named in the dream later told Paralios] that the evil spirit had told the same story about Paralios when he went to Menouthis. Both disclosed the vision to their companions in Horapollon's school.

Zachariah sets forth the prevailing Christian demonology for such dream-visions: Paralios saw an ontologically real being, but not Isis. It was rather "the evil spirit who represents this goddess." Thus, no Isis with divine attributes acted in the situation, but only one of the many nameless lower *daimones* whose nature Porphyrius of Tyre describes in great detail.[32] Less philosophical pagan theologians like Iamblichus (ob. c. 325–330) rejected Porphyrius' view that such spirits were evil.[33] The monk Stephen had put the issue to Paralios shortly before his visit to Menouthis.[34]

> Paralios found himself in agreement with the teaching of the great Stephen. He recalled the long conversation with Stephen and Athanasius on the perversity of malevolent *daimones*. They told him about the *daimones*' habit of rousing men against each other because they enjoyed wars and battles, and were the enemies of peace.

Paralios recalled Stephen's teaching after the visit to Menouthis. The spiritual tug of war between Christian and Hellenic drifts of thought and emotion exemplified in Paralios' case was a common feature of conversion to Christianity, which the individual educated in the *paideia* achieved only through protracted rumination.[35] It did not occur to Paralios or his friends the monks that the vision of Isis was merely an activation of the unconscious mind under the impact of the temple sculptures and new surroundings, wherein the dreamer often recalls his dreams with unaccustomed vividness.[36] In the Late Antique ethos dreams were thought to be the *Schauplatz* of the gods. Thus, Isis' warning that one of Paralios schoolmates was a sorcerer seemed plausible. Pagan and Christian magical papyri reflect the constant need for vigilance against sorcery felt by persons from every economic and educational stratum.[37] Paralios needed to clarify the business. Otherwise he risked abuse at the hands of the *daimon* that the unnamed sorcerer had dispatched.

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[32] Porphyrius of Tyre, *De Abstinentia* Bk. 2 in *Porphyrii Philosophi Platonici Opuscula Selecta*, ed. August Nauck (Leipzig 1886), 132–186. Cf. supra, Ch. II, Sect. 1.

[33] Iamblichus of Chalkis composed his *De Mysteriis* primarily to confute Porphyrius' criticisms of the pagan temple cults in the *Letter to Anebo*. Jamblique, *Les Mysteres d'Egypt*, ed. tr. Edouard des Places (Paris 1966), 8. Des Places does not, unfortunately, include the letter in his edition. Cf. Geffcken, *The Last Days of Greco-Roman Paganism*, 68.

[34] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 20.

[35] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 21. For several cases of well-educated men from Constantinople who seem to have gone through this, see infra, Ch. VII, Sect. 1.

[36] On incubation, see supra, Ch. II, Sect. 4, and Ch. IV, Sect. 3. In general, see: Ludwig Deubner, *De Incubatione Capita Quattuor* (Leipzig 1900). For the earlier phenomena of incubation at Asklepios shrines, with bibliography, see: Howard C. Kee, *Miracle in the Early Christian World* (New Haven 1983), 83–104.

Paralios therefore made a second visit to the Menouthis temple. Travelling alone, he will have taken along a small amount of incense, wine, or some wheat cakes to offer to the deity. Her failure to assume the usual illusion (φαντασία) of an epiphany convinced Paralios that his Christian friends were right:[38]

> The *daimon* (*shād*) persisted in her silence and did not let him see the usual illusion of her epiphany. After waiting quite a long time and offering many sacrifices (*debchē*), Paralios became annoyed and no longer doubted the evil character of the Hellenic teaching about *daimones*.

Isis, "that is the *daimon* who represents the goddess",[39] refused to appear out of a paradoxical perversity that drove Paralios into the hands of the Christian God.

It is symptomatic of Paralios' wavering that he had memorized a prayer taught him by the monk Stephen "to separate himself from the invocation of the pagan gods and *daimones*, Kronos . . ., Isis, and similar names."[40] The prayer called upon to Christian God as creator of the universe to "reveal the truth and not permit me to be seduced any longer by the combat-loving *daimon*, who arms men against each other and arouses them to altercations, nor by the other perverse *daimones* that resemble her."[41] Paralios had entered the temple this time armed with invocations to Isis *and* with a Christian prayer. In the end he resolved his own ambivalence by reciting the latter. It is not clear if he used the sign of the cross.[42] A recommended scripture to recite in such situations was Psalm 95.5: "All the gods of the pagans are *daimones*, but the Lord is their creator."[43] After his return to Alexandria Paralios began reciting this verse in front of his fellow pagan students and even his professor Horapollon,[44] the first public display of his conversion.

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[37] For some fifth-century cases of magic (ante 446), see infra, Ch. VII, Sect. 1. Magical papyri are briefly discussed supra, Ch. I, Sect. 3.

[38] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 21.

[39] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 20, Syriac lines 4–5.

[40] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 22, Syriac lines 4–5.

[41] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 21f.

[42] Infra, Ch. VII, Sect. I, where Hypatius of Rufinianae uses the sign of the cross to rid himself of an apparition of Artemis.

[43] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 1.

[44] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 22.

The Christian convert often had unpleasant experiences if he became radicalized in his new belief. Paralios not only repeated Psalm 95.5 frequently, but ridiculed Horapollon and other reputable philosophers like Asklepiodotos, Heraiskos, Ammonius, and Isidore.[45] Tension grew when Paralios accused the priestess of Isis who had supplied the infant to Asklepiodotos of being a temple prostitute.[46] Paralios' professors probably regarded this behavior as a sign of the times and a matter of naïve opinion, but his schoolmates did not. They gave him a thorough beating as Zachariah of Mytilene was going past:[47]

> Horapollon's students, being given to Hellenic foolishness, could not bear Paralios' sarcasm and insults. They fell upon him in the school while they were studying. They awaited the moment when few Christians were nearby and Horapollon was away. It was the sixth day of the week (Friday). On that day the professors observed the custom of lecturing and expounding to each other. Paralios absorbed many blows. His head was bruised all over and so was his body. After he succeeded in escaping their clutches with difficulty—for he had a strong physical constitution—he sought aid and refuge among the Christians, although a mob of pagans surrounded him and was kicking him. I was myself present at that moment, having a philosophy lecture to attend. Philosophers like Horapollon observed the custom of teaching in the school as usual on Friday.

Zachariah and his colleagues broke up the fight. With him were the Christian sophist Thomas of Gaza and a certain Zenodotus of Lesbos, all of them *philoponoi*:[48]

> As we found ourselves in the holy churches with the so-called *philoponoi*, who are called "zealots" in some place and "companions" in others, we appeared somewhat frightening. We closed in on the troublemakers and asserted the injustice of mistreating someone who wished to become a Christian, for this was what Paralios had cried out. The Hellenes, wishing to deceive and pacify us, retorted: "We have no business with you. We are revenging ourselves on Paralios as he is an enemy."

The Christian men brought Paralios to the Enaton monastery, where he received treatment for his injuries, but no special recognition as a martyr.[49]

The incident became a *cause célèbre* among the Christian professors and then entered the sphere of public policy. Solomon, the hegumen of Enaton, reported the altercation to Peter III Mongus, patriarch of Alexandria (482–489), who in turn referred the matter to the city councillors. Among them was the Christian rhetorician Aphthonius, a man of landed wealth with many students who had chosen to pursue a career in Hellenic learning. Aphthonius ordered his pupils to cooperate with Solomon in lodging a formal complaint before Entrichius, the Augustal Prefect of Egypt (c. 482–483).[50] The archdeacon and senior notary of the Alexandrian church introduced Paralios' case. The prefect Entrichius, who was said to be a cryptopagan, emptied the courtroom of everyone, including the archdeacon, except for five of the plaintiffs:[51]

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[45] See Chuvin's discussion, *Chronicle of the Last Pagans*, tr. B.A. Archer (London–Cambridge, Mass. 1990), 110f.

[46] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 23.

[47] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 23.

[48] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 24.

[49] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 24.

> Entrichius was an adept cryptopagan, as was the assistant he kept as his assessor. He was given openly to the cult of pagan *daimones*. The assessor began to insult us, had the large crowd of young men expelled, and ordered that only a small number give testimony about the incident. Five of us remained after the departure of Aphthonius' students: Paralios who was a confessor before his baptism; the illustrious Menas mentioned above; Zenodotus of Mytilene, a town of Lesbos; and Demetrius of Sulmone, all four of them vigorous contenders in their fear of God. I was the fifth person after them. When the Prefect understood the seriousness of the incident, he ordered whichever of us desired to draft a writ of accusation in the manner that seemed best. Paralios composed it, charging certain persons with having offered pagan sacrifices and with having fallen upon him like brigands.

Sacrifices in any form violated the emphatic provisions contained in the sixteenth book of the Theodosian Code. The Prefect Entrichius cleared the basilical hall not to obstruct the legal process, but, as Zachariah argues, simply in order to be able handle the formal procedures of the action without having to contend with shouting and hearsay statements by Aphthonius' students, who had not been witnesses to the incident. Verbal and physical altercations accompanied even the most minor hearings in the Alexandrian courts. The present affair was a case in point:[52]

> The Prefect ordered the accused to come forward. When the clergy and *philoponoi* learned of the insult made against men who rivalled them in their zeal for the good, and that the latter had information about sacrifices and other Hellenic practices that certain persons had dared to perpetrate, they rushed against the officials and attacked the

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[50] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 24f.
[51] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 25f.
[52] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 26f.

> Prefect's assessor with the cry: "It runs against propriety that a man of Hellenic faith be a government assessor and take part in the administration, for the laws and edicts of the emperors protect him!" The Prefect saved his assessor only with difficulty, once the outcry arose against him. As for ourselves the plaintiffs, he ordered us to remain calm. From this moment the entire populace rose up against the Hellenes. The accused fled beginning with Horapollon, who was the cause of the Hellenes' being persecuted. The Prefect worried the Hellenes least of all because of his liking for them.

The upshot of the hearing was the march of the clergy and monks of Alexandria to Menouthis, where they demolished and incinerated the Isis temple.[53]

The return of this strike-force became the occasion of great celebration and rough-housing in Alexandria. The *philoponoi*, clergy, and Tabennesiote monks had spent two or three days outside the city. Their march coincided with the Easter weekend. The leader of the *philoponoi*, a certain Hesychius, and his colleague Menas roused the crowds of Christians, who milled about in the streets screaming imprecations at Horapollon calling him Psychapollon or "soul-destroyer" in an invidious pun on his name. Patriarch Peter delivered an Easter homily containing a detailed description of the idols turned up at Menouthis.[54] The result was an idol-smashing riot:[55]

> The demos became inflamed and carted off all the idols of the pagan gods, whether found in the bath-houses or private homes. They put them in a heap and set them on fire.

A similar incident had occurred at Gaza nearly a century before, when bishop Porphyrius ordered the demolition of the Marneion. In each instance "carved images of the gods" were loosely defined as cult images. Thus, ordinary statuary in the bath-houses and in the courtyards of private houses was destroyed.[56] As the bath-houses had an unsavoury reputation with the stricter monks and clergy, the destruction of their "idols" made these sites of alleged vice less attractive. It is possible that the mobs singled out the houses prominent Hellenes for the destruction of statuary.

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[53] The precise details of this incident belong more strictly to the survival of rural paganism, and are therefore discussed in Ch. IX, Sect. 2. Zachariah's description makes it obvious how purposefully the cities dominated their *territoria* on issues of importance, whether it was a matter of deracinating rural cults or exploiting to peasantry for its agricultural surplus.

[54] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 32f.

[55] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 33.

[56] Cf. the destruction of privately owned statuary as "idols" at Gaza in 402. Supra, Ch. III, Sect. 4.

A procession of monks, clerics, and *philoponoi*, including Zachariah, himself returned to Alexandria shortly after this, carrying a rich booty of images and service vessels from the Isis temple at Menouthis[57] and leading the pagan priest who presided over the incubation cult there. Patriarch Peter interrogated him publicly:[58]

> We loaded twenty camels with a miscellany of idols, after burning some already at Menouthis. . . . We led them to the central part of the city in accordance with the order of the great Peter. In front of the Tychaion he convoked an assembly of the Prefect of Egypt, the local garrison commanders, all office holders, the local senate, and the landed magnates of the city. When all had taken seats, he had the idol-priest brought forward and made him stand on a raised platform. After the idols had been exposed the patriarch began to interrogate him.

Zachariah witnessed the inquiry and later wrote down a précis:[59]

> The patriarch demanded to know the meaning of this idolatry practiced with soulless matter, demanded to know the names of all the *daimones*, and required the pagan priest to explain the cause of each shape. At this moment the people were running forward to see. They heard what he said and then ridiculed the crimes of the pagan gods which the priest divulged. When the bronze altar was brought in along with the wooden dragon, the priest confessed to the sacrifices he had dared to perform and declared that the wooden dragon was the one that had deceived Eve. He claimed to have gotten this story from a tradition passed down from the first priests. He admitted that the Hellenes worshipped the dragon, which was thrown onto the pyre with the other idols. One could hear all the people crying out: "Look at Dionysus the hermaphrodite god! Look at Kronos the infant hater! There's Zeus the adulterer and pederast! Here's Athena, the virgin who loved war! There's Artemis the huntress and hater of travellers! This *daimon* Ares made war, and that one, Apollo, caused many people to die [of plague before the walls of Troy]! She's Aphrodite, who presides over prostitution! There is one among these who had charge of theft! As for Dionysus, he patronizes drunkenness! Among them are even dogs, monkeys, and families of cats, for these too were Egyptian gods!"

The Isis priest knew well what his interrogators wanted to hear. Using his knowledge of the Septuagint, he told them that the prototype of the wooden dragon was the actual serpent that had tempted Eve, an undoubted fabrication designed to appease the civil and church officials of the city with the mob they controlled.[60]

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[57] Infra, Ch. IX, Sect. 2.

[58] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 33f. Cf. Brooks, "Life of Severus," 470.

[59] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 34f.

[60] See Carlo Ginzburg's study based on the transcripts of Inquisition trials in

The ordinary Christians interrupted the priest's answers by shouting the Hellenic epithets of the deities represented by the statues: the hermaphrodite Dionysus, infant-hating Kronos (μισόπαις), Zeus the pederast (φιλόνεος), war-loving Athena (φιλοπτόλεμος) based on Athena Promachos, traveller-hating Artemis (μισόξενος),[61] and so forth. The crowds knew something of Homer's *Iliad*, as they referred to Apollo's legendary chastisement of the Achaeans at the beginning of the poem. The images of personal gods were evidently Hellenized variants of the Nilotic pantheon.

Zachariah of Mytilene denies that these idols had spiritually animate qualities, characterizing them as "matter without soul" (ὕλη), that is, inanimate. His attitude contradicts the view of many fifth-century Hellenes like Heraiskos that a numinous presence inhered in cult effigies.[62] As Zachariah has it, the matter of idols contained neither bad *daimones* nor any other force (δύναμις). His rationalistic view is also at variance with that of many bishops like Porphyrius of Gaza, who claimed to have expelled the *daimon* inside a statue of Aphrodite.[63] The supposed divinity of dogs, monkeys, and cats was a unique feature of Egyptian religion,[64] but Zachariah exaggerates their status.[65]

After the Isis priest had made these disclosures, the Christian crowds broke the hands and legs from the images, insulted Isis in Coptic (the Syriac text is badly garbled here), and ridiculed the pagans, that is the Hellenic professors and the rustic adherents of the Nile cults. The Christians then raised metric songs and acclamations in praise of the reigning emperor Zeno (474–491), patriarch Peter III Mongus (482–489), and the city councillors who had assembled for the hearing at the Tychaion.[66] The incident was concluded shortly after the suppression of the rebellion of Illus,

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16th–17th century Italy, which reveals similar examples of defendants' appeasing their interrogators by fabricating acts of witchcraft: *Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, tr. J. and A. Tedeschi (London 1983), xvii–xviii ("suggestive" questioning, etc.).

[61] On Artemis' supposed destruction of travellers in Bithynia c. 443–446, see infra, Ch. VII, Sect. 1.

[62] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 3.

[63] Supra, Ch. III, Sect. 4.

[64] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 35, Syriac lines 2–3.

[65] Ibid., line 3.

[66] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 35. This building may be the same Tychaion that the poet Palladas of Alexandria mentions in several of his epigrams. If so, the temple, was converted into a tavern. *Greek Anthology* 9.180–183. The goddess has become a "tavern-keeper" (9.180). Palladas perhaps derives a certain ironic pleasure from lecturing the Tyche on the reversal of fortune.

magister militum per Orientem, in 488,[67] but before the end of Peter Mongus' patriarchate on 29 October 489.[68]

In the wake of these events Peter Mongus sent a synodical letter mentioning the incident to Nonnus, metropolitan of Aphrodisias in Caria. It described the younger Asklepiodotos' incubation with his wife at Menouthis. It also named her father the elder Asklepiodotos, a prominent city councillor of Aphrodisias. The monks Solomon and Stephen of Enaton prodded the patriarch to take action[69] out of genuine antipathy for the Hellenes and partly out of sympathy for Athanasius and Paralios, who would now have to endure possible ostracism at the hands of his family in Aphrodisias. Peter Mongus' letter illustrates the wide network of ecclesiastical contacts and correspondence that would enable emperor Justinian the Great in the next century to tighten control over the cities and crush the local pagan aristocrats still sitting in the city councils.[70] In 488–89, the issue remained one of suppressing sacrifice in line with the proscriptions in the Theodosian Code.[71]

III. Some Conversions in Alexandria

A number of conversions resulted from the publicity surrounding the Paralios incident and the destruction of idols taken from Menouthis. Paralios received baptism not long afterward with a large group of ex-Hellenes. One can only guess at the spiritual struggle that lay behind these conversions:[72]

> Paralios offered this act to God and received saving baptism after the Easter festival, at the same time as many Hellenes who had zeal for idolatry and served the evil *daimones* for a long time and even in old age. Baptized with him were the admirable Urbanus who is today a professor (*grammaticus*) of Latin grammar in this imperial city [of Constantinople], Isidore of Lesbos, brother of the Zenodotus I mentioned above, and many others.

Alexandrians deeply tied to the Hellenic faith were still accepting conversion in the late 480's. The conversion of men like Isidore of Lesbos owed something to the camaraderie of fellow citizens from their hometowns living in the melting pot of the Egyptian capital and subject to its anomia.

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[67] Cf. Bury, LRE I, 396ff.
[68] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 40.
[69] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 39f.
[70] Infra, Ch. VI, Sect. 1.
[71] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 2, 5, and 6.
[72] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 37.

Paralios confessed certain emotional problems to Zachariah of Mytilene soon after his baptism:[73]

> Paralios received baptism after burning the invocation formulae to the pagan gods, that is to *daimones*, that he owned. These spirits had troubled him before divine baptism, but still troubled him during the night after the idols had been burned. He made me visit him to ask me what needed to be done. I went, taking with me a Christian book and wishing him to read Gregory the Theologian's homily of exhortation on saving baptism. I found him wet with perspiration and quite discouraged after his struggle with the *daimones*. He said that he could hardly breathe under impact of the Christian discourse. I asked him if he might still have some invocation formulae to the pagan gods lying about. He searched his memory and recalled that he owned some papyri of that type. Then he listened as I said: "If you wish to be delivered from the obsession of *daimones*, cast these papyri into the flames!" He did this in my presence, and was delivered from the obsession of the *daimones* from that moment onward.

Zachariah suggests that Paralios had been guilty of bad faith after his conversion, to the extent of failing to rid himself of all the papyrus copies (χάρτης) of pagan prayers and invocations in his library. We are left in the dark as to their contents. These texts might have consisted of simple prayers to Isis like those found in the papyri which Paralios certainly used himself when he visited Menouthis.[74] They might, on the other hand, have been sophisticated Atticized prayers like those written by Proclus in Athens as late as the 480's,[75] or the more nefarious magical texts containing invocations for summoning *daimones* in order to effect spells. The prayers more probably belonged to the Proclan variety for one particular reason. A catechumen who had destroyed his household idols would inevitably have burned all the *koine* prayers and magical texts in his possession. If he were well educated, however, he might have kept the Atticist prayers ("invocations") in his library. The rules for studying the *paideia* set forth by Basil of Caesarea (ob. 379) in his *Address to Young Men on How to Profit from Pagan Literature* excluded the use of such texts.[76]

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[73] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 37f.

[74] *P. Oxy.*, 1380.

[75] Supra, Ch. IV, Sect. 3.

[76] Basil of Caesarea makes two crucial observations in this connection: "But least of all shall we give attention to [the poets] when they narrate anything about the gods, and especially when they speak about them as being many (ὅταν ὡς περὶ πολλῶν τε αὐτῶν διεξίωσι), and these too not even in accord with one another." He adds: "We ourselves too, if we are wise, having appropriated from this literature what is suitable to us and akin to the truth, will pass over the remainder (ὑπερβησόμεθα τὸ λειπόμενον). *Saint Basil: The Letters*, tr. Roy J.

Zachariah of Mytilene defined Paralios' mental state as one of "obsession" (literally "heavy care"). It was the frame of mind of a man who before his conversion had read the Hellenic texts aloud (*anagignōskein*) frequently in a devotional manner and could not after his baptism shake them from his unconscious memory.[77] Recollections and even a tendency to pronounce whole verses with their meters and assonances emerged in the still hours of the night. Such were the imagined activities of the *daimones*, one might even say the *daimon* or inspired intellect of the Hellene, which even Christian baptism could not erase completely. Paralios' torment began to ease after he confided in his friend. The catharitic of confession gained impetus as Paralios symbolically burned the papyrus sheets containing the offending prayers. The *philoponoi* must have practiced this form of psychic medicine on recent converts quite often. They did not, however, understand its processes. Even the most rationalistic Alexandrian Christian can hardly have doubted that *daimones* aroused all kinds of auditory and visual fantasies (φαντασίαι).[78] Zachariah supplemented the therapy by prescribing that Paralios read an unnamed exhortatory homily of Gregory of Nazianzus.

The homily inspired Paralios to join his brother Athanasius at Enaton and to become a monk.[79] He did this after the expiry of the eight-day period of wearing the white garment of the newly baptized. He also led off Zachariah's good friend Stephen who was studying medicine.[80] Paralios eventually returned home to Aphrodisias in order to convert his two pagan brothers.[81] This sequel will claim our attention later. As Paralios had no ecclesiastical status but was a mere monk, he could go wherever he chose so long as he had gotten the consent of the hegumen. The similar example of a young man returning to Constantinople to convert his brothers is

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Deferrari, 4 (London-Cambridge, Mass. 1934), 388–391. Cf. Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* 3 (Utrecht-Antwerp 1960), 214f.

[77] A similar situation arose with Anastasius the Persian, an Iranian cavalryman who had been born of a priestly family and in consequence had memorized many Mazdaean prayers and invocations. After his conversion to Christianity he suffered from obsessive recollection of the old prayers. In order to resolve his self-doubts, Anastasius left his monastery and sought martyrdom at the hands of a Sassanid garrison detachment stationed in Palestine c. 628. *Acta M. Anastasii Persae*, ed. Hermann Usener (Bonn 1894), 2–8. For discussion, see: Trombley, *Survival of Paganism*, 88–92.

[78] Supra, Ch. V, Sect. 2.

[79] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 38.

[80] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 39.

[81] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 39ff.

reported in the life of Hypatius of Refunianae, a monastery in Bithynia.[82]

The destruction of the idols taken at Menouthis led to sharp exchanges of opinion between Hellenes and Christians in Alexandria. Zachariah relates an anecdote about one such exchange in order to refute the later Chalcedonian accusation against Severus, the future monophysite patriarch of Antioch, that he had participated in sacrifices during his student days in Alexandria. The *philoponos* Menas died shortly after the Menouthis incident, but not before prophesying that Severus would someday become a bishop. At this time Severus was still a catechumen hanging about on the fringes of the Christian religion. His only point of contact was friendship with some of the *philoponoi*.[83] Zachariah takes great pains to exculpate Severus' indifference to Christianity at that time, but could only develop a list of rather abstract virtues, along with the fact of the mutual esteem and affection that existed between Menas and Severus.

The Hellenes made many recriminations against the *philoponoi* for the destruction of the Menouthis temple. When Zachariah fell ill after being selected to deliver the eulogy beside Menas' grave, his pagan friends warned that he would surely die for his role in destroying the images, a sacrilege against the old gods:[84]

> At this time Menas was afflicted with a bodily illness. The Hellenes thought we would soon receive our punishment for what we had done to their gods and for our burning their idols in a state of religious zealotry. They spread the rumor that I too would assuredly die at that time.

Zachariah used the occasion of his recovery and the graveside service for the deceased Menas to repay his pagan friends for their compliments during his illness. As friends of Menas they had accepted the invitation to attend the obsequies. Zachariah greeted them with the withering blows of a *philoponos*' rhetoric:[85]

> When I was finally delivered from the illness through a miracle caused by the beneficence of our savior Jesus Christ, I pronounced the eulogy in behalf of the illustrious Menas in a graveside oration. I mentioned the destruction of the pagan idols. I recalled their annihilation by fire in front of the entire urban populace. In conclusion I recounted all that had passed, as was necessary, over the tomb of a

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[82] Infra, Ch. VII, Sect. 1.
[83] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 44.
[84] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 45.
[85] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 45f.

> man who had gained the admiration even of the Hellenes in spite of the zealotry he showed against them because of his great kindness and love of neighbor. The great Severus rejoiced greatly at this oration and gloried in the phrases I proferred against the Hellenes as though they applied to him. He commended me immoderately. At the same time, the Hellenes whom we had invited to come and listen, having come without knowing what was going to be said, wept, so to speak, over their misfortunes, and one of them cried out in anger: "If you had the intention of speaking against the gods why did you invite us to the tomb of your friend?"

By relating this pointed anecdote Zachariah sought to demonstrate Severus' satisfaction with the closure of the Menouthis temple and the humiliation of their pagan friends. The story reveals the existence of close personal relationships between Hellenes and Christians, and the lengths to which these well-educated young men went to insult each other publicly over differences of religious belief. The Hellenes were a captive audience and could hardly have walked out in a fit of rage or have begun a shouting match at the funeral service. Zachariah pronounces no sequel, as the scene of his narrative shifts to the imperial law school at Berytus.[86]

Zachariah of Mytilene's narrative reveals a great flux in religious values at Alexandria during the 480's. In the end, a convinced Hellene like Paralios of Aphrodisias accepted baptism sooner than his elder contemporary Severus of Sozopolis, a lukewarm catechumen with a taste for Hellenic religion who would take over the intellectual and political leadership of the monophysite movement in the next century.[87] The Christian *philoponoi* developed a vigorous polemic based on the writings of Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus, but at the same time displayed a humane interest in the religious doubts and cultic experiments of men like Paralios and Severus. This approach entailed making midnight visits to dispirited catechumens and even delivering them from fisticuffs. Alexandria stands in sharp contrast to Athens, which had neither *philoponoi* nor a strong monastic community. Fewer conversions of the kind attested here will have occurred in Athens, a university town full of philosophers and rhetors cast in the mold of Proclus, who performed sacrifices, practiced theurgy, and revived long-dead theologies. A John Chrysostom might have visited the philosophical schools in Athens and escaped as a more convinced Christian, but prospects in Athens did not favor provincials like Severus of

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[86] Infra, Ch. V, Sect. 5.

[87] See Frend's discussion of this problem: *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 202–205.

Sozopolis, who might well have apostasized from the catechumenate and become a religious Hellene for a time.

The professional interaction between pagan and Christian professors and students was not always cordial, but they conversed with frankness and mutual respect. Horapollon was not prosecuted for his performance of sacrifices. Toleration remained the rule at Alexandria after the furor over the events of 488–89 died out. The *philoponoi* eroded the Hellenic faith of many students. As scions of the decurion families, the *philoponoi* presented the case for Christianity in a rhetoric and logic geared to Atticized ears. If they made great inroads among Hellenes, it seems improbable that pagan scholars lapsed into poverty for lack of student fees. The example of John Chrysostom, who studied with Libanius at Antioch, suggests that the criterion for selecting a professor was his professional calibre and not his religious faith. Zachariah of Mytilene fails to name Severus' professors of Greek and Latin rhetoric. His silence suggests that they were Hellenes.

IV. Some Alexandrian Connections with Aphrodisias in the Reign of Zeno (c. 488–491)

Aphrodisias, the provincial capital of Caria and "holy city" of Aphrodite, had many Hellenes among its city councillors and landed magnates in the late fifth century, as the inscriptions recently published by Charlotte Roueché demonstrate in graphic terms.[88] The city may have had a school of philosophy, for the excavations have turned up statues of philosophers from the Late Antique period. The final verdict awaits the full-scale publication of Aphrodisias' physical remains.

The involvement of the elder Asklepiodotos, a city councillor of Aphrodisias, with the Menouthis incident had become public knowledge in Alexandria.[89] Solomon the hegumen of Enaton began to worry in monkish fashion that other persons like Paralios might fall into the deception or "insanity" of propitiating Isis for favors, as her cult was far from dead. He therefore persuaded Peter Mongus to put together a *praxis* or summary of the notes (*hypomnēmata*) taken by the defensor of the city during the interrogation of the Isis priest at the Tychaion of Alexandria. Solomon also got the patriarch to send a synodical letter to Nonnus, archbishop of Aphrodisias, to expose the role of the elder Asklepiodotos in the Menouthis affair. The letter never arrived. Zachariah of Mytilene complains that certain unnamed persons bribed the letter carrier after he reached Caria.[90] It seems probable that the courier, a subordinate of the Prefect of Egypt, met with the city councillors, among whom he will have found Asklepiodotos himself (the object of the communique), a certain Pytheas, and many other Hellenes,[91] to whom Zachariah refers as "the pagans who are in Aphrodisias".[92] The Menouthis incident with the story of the faked miracle of Isis became public knowledge at Aphrodisias later when the imperial judge Adrastos, a Christian advocate (*scholastikos*) of Carian birth, sent a copy of the original *praxis* at the request of the Prefect of Egypt.[93] The publication of the document seems not to have affected Asklepiodotos' position, for he died much esteemed by his fellow citizens in the 490's.[94]

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[88] Infra, Ch. VI.
[89] Infra, Ch. IX, Sect. 2.

It will be recalled that Paralios of Aphrodisias joined his brother Athanasius at the Enaton monastery only eight days after his baptism. Paralios' first concern became the conversion of his two other brothers still in Aphrodisias, Demochares the barrister (*scholastikos*) and Proclus the teacher of rhetoric (*sophistēs*).[95] Paralios wrote them a discursive letter from which Zachariah of Mytilene reproduces extracts. It gives important information about the local participants in Illus' rebellion.

The pagan decurions of Aphrodisias supported the great revolt of Illus, an Isaurian who was *magister militum per Orientem*, that lasted c. 481–488.[96] He rallied many symphatizers to his side from the pagan intellectuals. These Hellenists hoped for increased religious toleration and possibly the resumption of public sacrifice.[97] Prominent among them was Pamprepius of Panopolis, who had studied philosophy with Proclus at Athens. Illus got Pamprepius a professorship of grammar in Constantinople and later the office of *quaestor*. Pamprepius, whose enemies had succeeded in getting him exiled to Pergamum on a charge of sorcery, became the political creature of Illus and joined the rebellion as his *quaestor*.[98]

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[90] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 36.

[91] Infra, Ch. VI, Sect. 2.

[92] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 36, Syriac line 12.

[93] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 36f. Entrichios belongs after Arsenios in the sequence of prefects, that is between c. 487–29 October 489. The latter is the date of Peter III Mongus' death, the *terminus ante quem* for the events at Alexandria described in Zachariah's narrative. See: André Bataille, *Traité d'études byzantines II: Les Papyrus* (Paris 1955), 72.

[94] Infra, Ch. VI, Sect. 2.

[95] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 39. The text reads literally: "He was the sophist of the city;" but Proclus cannot have been the only professor of rhetoric at Aphrodisias.

[96] Bury, LRE 1, 395–98.

[97] Ibid., 398f.

Paralios' family in Aphrodisias, including his brothers Damochares and Proclus, supported Illus' side in the civil war, as did other prominent Aphrodisians. The oracle-givers in the city distributed a veritable flood of predictions promising the overthrow of the legitimate emperor Zeno, as Paralios' letter to his brothers reveals:[99]

> Do you remember how we as Hellenes in Caria offered sacrifices to the pagan gods, when we asked these purported gods every manner of thing, while dissecting livers and examining them by magic arts to be informed whether we would defeat the emperor Zeno, now of pious memory, when we supported Leontius, Illus, Pamprepius, and the other rebels on their side? At that time we received many oracles as promises that the emperor Zeno cound not resist their attack, that the moment had come when Christianity would disintegrate and disappear, and that Hellenic cult would persist. The outcome [of the rebellion] proved that the oracles were lies, just as it fell out with those given by Apollo to Croesus and Pyrrhus of Epirus.

Marinus of Neapolis' life of Proclus and Damascius' life of Isidore agree that many oracles were in circulation at this time.[100] Oracles were easy to produce, requiring diviners capable of composing dactylic hexameters and an interested audience of Hellenists. The destruction of Illus' faction provided a decisive argument against the reliability of oracles, a sombre fact that was evident to Hellenes in their own *paideia*. Christian writers like Isidore of Pelusium used the historical works of Herodotus and Plutarch to great advantage in discrediting the fifth-century oracles.

An anonymous Christian writer of the late fifth century used radical methods in a work called the *Oracles of the Hellenic Gods* (χρησμοὶ τῶν ἑλληνικῶν θεῶν).[101] Produced in the reign of the emperor Zeno, this work contains an assortment of oracles both genuine and bogus.[102] The bogus oracles contain questions addressed to Apollo followed by the god's admission of his impotence in the face of the Christian God. Three examples will suffice. The first of them owes more than a little to Christian ideas of exorcism:[103]

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[98] Rudolf Asmus, "Pamprepios, ein byzantinischer Gelehrter und Staatsmann des 5. Jahrhunderts," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 22 (1913), 320–347.

[99] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 40.

[100] Damascius, *Epit. Phot. 171* (Zintzen, 236). Idem, *Epit. Phot. 276* (Zintzen, 276. line 22).

[101] Karl Buresch, *Klaros. Untersuchungen zum Orakelwesen des späten Altertums* (Leipzig 1889; repr. 1973), 95–126. This text hereinafter cited as *Klaros.*

[102] Buresch, *Klaros*, 95, lines 14–17.

> Most wretched of temple wardens! You need not ask me this final question about God the Father and his only begotten and beloved Son, who is responsible for every divine utterance and presage (for the divine presage and prophecy is a voice that makes manifest that which exists), and concerning the all-holy Spirit who encompasses all things round about like a grape cluster. This Spirit shall also drive me forth unwillingly from these buildings. The doorpost of the shrine that used to dispatch persons seeking oracles to the parts within shall at once be left vacant. My mantic tripods, you groan: "Woe! Alas! I Apollo am perishing! I am perishing because he who is come down from heaven and become man, he who is rational fire, is tormenting and persecuting me!"

This instance mentions no ritual contamination of the Apollo temple with the relics of the Christian dead. Instead a battle of spirits is waged in a world unseen. The temple buildings and doorpost leading to the oracular chamber are empty as the tripods cry out hollow through the empty hall.

In a second instance the Mother of God or Theotokos undermines the oracles:[104]

> In the years of emperor Leo [the First (457–474)], an idol-temple of the same age as the city of Cyzicus was on the point of being transformed by the citizens into the chapel (ἔμελλε . . . εἰς εὐκτήριον μετασκευασθῆναι οἶκον) of our most glorious mistress the Theotokos. An oracle was found incised on a great stone along the temple wall. The same oracle was found in Athens on the gate at the left side of the temple, being identical with the one [at Cyzicus]. When the citizens inquired of Apollo, "Prophesy unto us O prophet Phoebus Titan Apollo, whose house this might be," he gave an oracular response in these words:
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> "Do as many things as rouse one to virtue and order, for I announce the three-in-one One God that rules on high, whose immortal word (*logos*) shall become impregnated in an innocent woman. He shall offer a gift to the Father, taking the entire cosmos captive after running through its midst like a fire-bearing arrow. This shall be her house and her name is Maria."

The epithet of the Christian God "ruling on high" (ὑψιμέδων) was taken from the now dead Zeus. The expression "taking captive" (ζωγρήσας) contains a pun, having also the sense of "restoring to life" or "converting".[105] The temple conversion at Cyzicus was unquestionably a historical event. Here the memory of the cult of the dead god Apollo had not died out even c. 457–474, another fragment of evidence disproving the view that temples were converted only after their pagan cultic associations had been completely forgotten. The oracle had an important function. If the *daimon* Apollo could be gotten to recognize his temple as the proper residence of the Mother of God, continuity of cult between the old and new religions was assured in the use of valuable inner-city lots and cultic buildings.

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[103] Buresch, *Klaros*, 99f.

[104] Buresch, *Klaros*, 111f.

[105] Cf. *A Greek-English Lexicon*, ed. H.G. Liddell *et al.* (Oxford 1968), 758.

The third bogus oracle puts a prophecy of the incarnation of Christ into the mouth of the Sibyl, all of it in dactylic hexameters:[106]

> The Sibyl pronounced this oracle about the Christ:
>
> Then shall the flesh-bearing child of the Great God come among men, made like mortals on earth, [his name] bearing four vowels and twice [the same] consonant in it. I enumerate the entire series. Eight monads, as many as there are decades among them, and eight hekatontads will explain the name to men filled with unbelief. But you [the hearer] are perceptive enough in your wits. This writer about the knowledge of divine things cites the name IHCOYC as the solution to the riddle, and does so securely, I think.

The *Oracula Sibyllina*, a sixth-century Christian recension of second- and third-century oracle texts, incorporates this pronouncement of the Sibyl as well.[107]

It should be obvious from the behavior of the Aphrodisian Hellenes during the civil war with Illus that the animal sacrifice still had great importance in pagan religious belief and practice. In a certain sense Paralios could be thankful for the deeply embedded nature of these rites, because they offered an opportunity to prove the impotence of the old gods when confronted with the cross. The oracular sacrifices during the civil war seem to have taken place at a temenos outside the city walls:[108]

> When we sacrificed in those places outside the city, we were deprived of every sign, vision, and response [in the animals' entrails], although we habitually grasped at some illusion of this sort. Preyed upon by perplexity, we searched and asked ourselves what this meant. We changed the place of sacrifice. In spite of this the beings reckoned as gods remained silent and their cult remained without effect. We thought they were annoyed at us. At length, we got the idea that someone in the group had a will opposed to what we wanted to

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[106] Buresch, *Klaros*, 123f.

[107] Frank R. Trombley and Alexander Kazhdan, "Sibylline Oracles," *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. A. Kazhdan *et al.* 3 (Oxford 1991), 1890f.

[108] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 40f.

> accomplish. We questioned each other, asking if we were all of the same outlook. We discovered that one young man had made the sign of the cross in the name of Christ. By that act he rendered our petition empty and our sacrifices without effect, as the so-called gods often flee before the name of Christ and sign of the cross. We did not know how to explain the matter [from the standpoint of ritual]. Asklepiodotos with the other sacrificers and magicians reflected on the matter. One of them imagined that he had resolved the difficulty: "The cross is a sign indicating that a man has died a violent death. The gods justifiably have a horror of shapes of this kind."

Paralios' letter confounds the elder Asklepiodotos with the faction opposed to the emperor Zeno and as one who supervised the oracular sacrifice. By making the sign of the cross during the rites the Christian sought to fend off the *daimones* thought to be attracted by the animal blood and invocations. It was a well-accepted principle that the cross caused epiphanies of the gods to vanish and oracular responses to fail. An incident of this kind in 298 helped precipitate the Great Persecution:[109]

> At a sacrifice held in the presence of Diocletian and his Caesar Galerius the *haruspices* were unable to obtain the desired omens, and attributed their failure to Christians present, who were averting the power of the demons by making the sign of the Cross. Diocletian, who seems to have been a man of rather old-fashioned piety—he had adopted the old Roman god Jupiter Optimus Maximus as his patron—was naturally infuriated by this insolent interruption of the traditional rites of the Roman state, and issued an order that all soldiers must sacrifice to the gods or be discharged.

Julian the Apostate is said to have made the sign of the cross at the sight of an apparition during his initiation to a mystery cult in a moment of self-forgetfulness:[110]

> I have also heard that one day Julian descended into the most noted and terrific adytum either for the purpose of participating in some initiation, or of consulting an oracle; and that, by means of machinery which is devised for this end, or of enchantments, such frightful specters were projected suddenly before him, that through perturbation or fear, he became forgetful of those who were present, for he had turned to his new religion when already a man, and so unconsciously fell into his earlier habit, and signed himself with the symbol of Christ, just as the Christian encompassed with untried dangers is wont to do. Immediately the specters disappeared and their designs

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[109] Quoted from Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 71.

[110] Sozomen, HE 5.2. Translation quoted in modified form from *Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, tr. H. Wace and P. Schaff, 2 (Oxford 1891), 326. The story goes back to Gregory of Nazianzus, *Contra Iulianum I*.55–56, PG 35, 577C–580B. Cf. Quasten, *Patrology* 3, 242.

> were frustrated. The initiator was at first surprised at this, but when apprised of the cause of the flight of the demons, he declared that the act was a profanation; and after exhorting the emperor to be courageous and to have no recourse in deed or thought to anything connected with the Christian religion, he again conducted him to the initiation.

Asklepiodotos' associate supposed that the cross, as a symbol of violent death through crucifixion, prevented all activity by the gods through symbolic ritual pollution. Recent contact with a corpse was thought, in fact, to invalidate priestly acts. The movement of corpses into sacred precincts, not to mention the killing of men (except of course in human sacrifices), defiled the temple and necessitated ritual purification before efficacious rites could be again performed. The Hellenes believed that the erection of the cross by symbolically drawing it over one's body had the same effect as importing a corpse to the scene of a sacrifice. In temple conversions Christians erected and incised crosses just for this reason: the resultant symbolic ritual pollution weakened the power of the *daimon* formerly worshipped as a god.

Quite surprisingly, Paralios' letter dismisses this idea. He cites the example of the human sacrifice practiced in the "mysteries in behalf of the Sun-god . . . Shemshō",[111] that is Mithra. He observes:[112]

> If it is true, my brothers, that the gods retire before whatever signifies that persons have died a violent death, why did the so-called gods not manifest themselves in the mysteries in behalf of Shemshō in front of those about to be initiated when the hierophant produced a sword defiled with the blood of a man who had died a violent death? The friends of truth should take this alone into account: the sign of the cross made by the young man over his face proved that the so-called gods are nothing. . . . [If anything] the pagan gods greatly desire the deaths of men, seeing that they are evil *daimones*. . . . This is why they refuse to make revelations except in the sight of a [priest] who, pursuant to their devices, has killed violently and calls out their signals. This is why they prescribed human sacrifice, as the historians of their cult say, and even Porphyrius [of Tyre].

Mithraism died out in the late fourth century, the last *taurobolia* being attested at Athens in 387 and at Rome in 390.[113] This ceremony entailed sacrificing a bull and allowing its blood to drain onto the priest or initiate. Aphrodisias has no known Mithraeum.

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[111] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 42, Syriac lines 2–3.

[112] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 41f.

[113] Geffcken, *Last Days of Greco-Roman Paganism*, 174.

On the other hand the Neoplatonist Proclus had followers in Aphrodisias. It cannot be excluded that his interest in religious arcana and extinct cults stimulated an antiquarian revival of Mithraism. Paralios must have known about the excavation of a Mithraeum in Alexandria during the reign of Julian the Apostate:[114]

> There was a place in that city which had long been abandoned to neglect and filth, wherein the pagans had formerly celebrated their mysteries, and sacrificed human beings to Mithra. . . . In the process of clearing it, an *adyton* of vast depth was discovered which unveiled the nature of their pagan rites: for there were found there the skulls of many persons of all ages who were said to have been immolated for the purpose of divination by the inspection of entrails.

The priests of Mithra seem to have simulated human sacrifice by coating the bared sword with animal blood and by placing looped swords around the torsos of their ostensible human victims.[115] Paralios' demonology owed something to the second book of Porphyrius of Tyre's *De Abstinentia*, which argues that the gods abhor all forms of human and animal sacrifice.[116] Porphyrius (c. 270) was a Neopythagorean and a dissenter from the ritual of the temple cults.[117] In 448 Theodosius II had ordered copies of his book against the Christians burned, but the *De Abstinentia* proved a useful work for the Christian polemic against sacrifice.[118] For example, Theodoret of Cyrrhus cites Porphyrius many times in his *Therapeutic for Hellenic Maladies* on questions related to sacrifice and the activity of *daimones*.[119]

This was the tenor of Paralios' argument in the letter to his brothers. Athanasius and Stephen of Enaton helped him frame the arguments.[120] The milieu of the Alexandrian monks and *philoponoi* thus gave the letter its defining characteristics. These arguments had little power to convince. Paralios' brothers do not seem to have converted to Christianity, for Zachariah of Mytilene is silent on this point.[121] The typical Hellene seldom found Porphyrius of Tyre's arguments against sacrifice convincing, as for example the Neoplatonists of Proclus' circle in Athens. Those who accepted Christianity often did so because they liked the humane spirit and Greek rhetoric of the *philoponoi*.[122] Faith in pagan oracles thus persisted even after the failure of Illus' rebellion despite the verdict of historical evidence and recent events, as Isidore of Pelusium (ob. c. 435)[123] and Theodoret of Cyrrhus (ob. 458)[124] had shown. Not every Hellene was susceptible to conversion by argumentation, as Zachariah silently concedes. Miraculous cures sometimes bridged this gap. A believer in pagan oracles might accept the new religion if its "magic" were superior to the old.[125]

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[114] Socrates, HE 3.2 (summary). PG 67, 380C–381C. Cf. Franz Cumont, *Textes et monuments figures relatifs aux mystères de Mithra II: Textes et monuments* (Brussels 1896), 44.

[115] MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire*, 125.

[116] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 1.

[117] Geffcken overlooks this point in assessing Porphyrius' discussion of sacrifices. *Last Days of Greco-Roman Paganism*, 68–70.

[118] *Cod. Iust.* 1.1.3. Cf. the reference to Constantine's previous condemnation of Porphyrius' work in *Cod. Theod.* 16.5.66.

[119] Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Graecarum Affectionum Curatio*, ed. Ioannes Raeder (Leipzig 1904). List of references, p. 334.

[120] This is a reasonable supposition, considering Paralios' relative youth at the time, and the fact that Stephen and Athanasius had been his mentors in the confrontation with the younger Horapollon. Supra, Ch. V, Sect. 2.

After the death of Stephen of Enaton, Paralios and his brother returned to Aphrodisias to convert their brothers. This probably happened in the mid-490's. Paralios established a monastic community, but left it under the administration of Athanasius and their father, who quite obviously converted to Christianity. Athanasius outlived Paralios and is said to have converted many pagans in Caria.[126] The monastery was evidently built on family estates, whence came its endowment.[127] It is possible that Athanasius convinced some well educated Hellenes to become Christians, but will also have converted many rustics living on the family estates by the proven methods of building small churches and having the monks catechize these folk. The life of Hypatius of Rufinianae indicates that this sort of work was still in progress in Bithynia c. 443–446.[128]

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[121] But their father did accept Christianity. Infra, this section.

[122] On the impact of humane approaches to conversion in the countryside, see: Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 352.

[123] Isidore of Pelusium, *Ep.* 3.23 ("To Asklepios the sophist."): "If Xerxes (for I have read from your [histories], O sophist!) yoked the Hellespont, he was not able to yoke the Athenians with the yoke of slavery." PG 78, 745D–748A. It is evident from this that Isidore had read Herodotus' *Histories*, a work which mentions the temple officials at Delphi being bribed to produce politically biased oracles, not to mention the response of Apollo that Croesus mistook for a promise of victory if he attacked Persia. Isidore seems to have read Plutarch as well, as he indicates after quoting a letter of Libanius to John Chrysostom on the subject of Atticism. *Ep.* 2.42, PG 78, 484B–D. Isidore also claimed to have read Thucydides, an author full of cynicism about oracle-mongering. *Epp.* 4.91, 5.497, and 5.546.

[124] See the complete index of classical writers cited in Theodoret, *Curatio* (Raeder, 324–338).

[125] Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 340.

[126] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 43, Syriac line 13.

[127] Overlooked in John P. Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations in the Byzantine Empire* (Washington, D.C. 1987).

[128] Infra, Ch. VII, Sect. 1.

John of Ephesus (ob. c. 587) reveals that the Carian countryside was still being Christianized between 536–566.[129] Athanasius had drawn his inspiration from the semi-urban monks of Enaton, which stood at the ninth milestone from Alexandria. In the next century John of Ephesus' monks recruited in Syria and Armenia would carry on this work.[130] The Alexandrian connection with Caria in the 490's reached not only the "holy city" of Aphrodite, but also the soil of the countryside that she was thought to fertilize.

V. The Philoponoi in Berytus and the Eradication of Magic

Little is known about the elimination of the pagan cults from Berytus in Phoenicia Libanensis.[131] Zachariah of Mytilene's narrative deals with the period after the final closure of the temples. Theurgy and magic remained important elements in Hellenic belief and practice there in the 490's.[132] The phenomena of cult in Berytus closely resemble those of other localities.

Zachariah of Mytilene had by this time completed his rhetorical education in Alexandria and had gone on to the imperial law school at Berytus, where he was an *edictalis* or first-year law student.[133] Other pupils like Severus of Sozopolis arrived there as no more than Christian catechumens after years of exposure to the pagan scholars of Alexandria and their cult practices. Much of that ethos was carried over to Berytus. Law students led unruly lives. They consorted with pagan scholars who practiced theurgy and magicians skilled in the baser forms of sorcery. Adherents of the *philoponoi* like Zachariah sought to keep themselves free of taint from the prevailing modes of their peers, but also to lure mediocre catechumens and even Hellenes into the churches. They effected many conversions among the law students by purely intellectual methods. Informal association using the methods of the *philoponoi* gave institutional structure to these activities.

Zachariah dwells at great length on the talks he had with Severus that led to the latter's conversion. Severus was at that time a *dupondius* or second-year law student.[134] The two men met on the first day of classes in the school of Leontius, a legal scholar and lecturer of high repute. Zachariah, although alienated from Severus' quasi-Hellenic life-style, struck up a close friendship with him and in time convinced him to accept baptism.[135] Their relationship provides the excellent example of an intellectually inspired conversions. The two-fold method consisted of getting the Hellene or catechumen to visit one of the local churches, and then of getting him to read Christian texts of high stylistic quality like those of Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and others.

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[129] Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 330f.

[130] Ibid. 336, n. 56.

[131] Paul Collinet, *Histoire de l'École de droit de Beyrouth* (Paris 1925), 79–115 (on student life in Berytus).

[132] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 3.

[133] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 47, Syriac line 3.

[134] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 47f.

Zachariah habitually visited Christian shrines after the law lectures, including the church of the Theotokos, which lay inside the old city near the harbor.[136] When Severus asked him for information about salvation—the upshot of some spiritual crisis—Zachariah invited him to visit this church whose interior had murals depicting the Genesis story.[137] Severus also asked him for some copies of books by Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus.[138] After getting Severus to recite prayers with him, Zachariah recounted the story of the Creation to him with the aid of the church's decorative program: "While I related this, I was *showing* him Adam and Eve, for they were painted in the church dressed in skin tunics after their expulsion from paradise."[139] It speaks for the tenuous state of Christianization even of well educated catechumens that Severus lacked even the most basic knowledge of the Creation story written in the Septuagint. Church decoration had a profound effect even on the cathechization of the intellectuals. Not much had changed since the days when temple sacristans accompanied visitors through the pagan shrines at festival time, explaining the myths about the local great god from the sculptures and paintings.[140] Seeing was believing. The display of mosaics or murals amidst a forest of marble columns in the typical early Christian basilica led to many conversions.[141] It certainly worked with Severus. When Zachariah told him the story of the Incarnation, Severus accepted its miraculous character.[142] It had abolished the Hellenic faith:[143]

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[135] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 47.
[136] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 48.
[137] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 49.
[138] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 48.
[139] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 49.
[140] MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire*, 29–31.
[141] Ernst Kitzinger provides no discussion of icons in this didactic context in: "The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 8 (1954), 83–150.
[142] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 50.
[143] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 51.

> Christ, after conquering the entire world through his apostles, abolished the oracles of Hellenic magic and the sacrifices to *daimones*.

Zachariah had more in mind than oracles, sacrifices, and magic. He viewed the social customs of student life in Berytus as Hellenism as well, that is, the undifferentiated secularism commonly accepted in the cities of the Greek East as the cultural norm. Conversion in an intellectual sense meant abandoning this as well:[144]

> [Severus:] You have spoken well . . . for I am studying law.
>
> [Zachariah:] If you wish to place your trust in me, the holy scriptures, and the catholic doctors of the church, you must first avoid the shameful public spectacles, the horse races, the theatre, and the areas where one watches wild beasts in combat with poor and unfortunate men. Finally, you must keep your body chaste and offer evening prayers to God in the churches every day after studying law. It is proper for us who know God to complete our evening exercises in the holy churches while the others ordinarily pass their time at dice-play and drinking with prostitutes in utter self-abasement.

This is not simply a list of vices, but a picture of the secular milieu of the Greek cities, the haunt of diviners who took fees to predict the victory of favorite charioteers and the places where sorcerers called *daimones* down upon athletes to ensure the victory of their clients. The mime shows featured drama and farce based on the myths of the Hellenic gods. The skits were quite ribald, at times insulting Christ, the Theotokos, and the martyrs.[145]

The accepted definition of "conversion" in the 490's often went beyond the mere acceptance of baptism. It often meant asceticism and the renunciation of ordinary secular life (κοσμικὸς βίος).[146] The *philoponoi* showed the way: one did not have to become a monk or cleric to accept "conversion". Severus found it arduous enough just to give up the circus and theatre. Monasticism seemed abhorrent:[147]

> [Severus:] You shall not make a monk out me. I am a law student greatly attached to jurisprudence. If you desire anything else, say so.
>
> [Zachariah:] I am in this city to study civil law as well, for I too love jurisprudence. When you mentioned your concern about salvation, I

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[144] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 51. Cf. the opening section of Zachariah's dialogue on the creation of the universe. Supra, Ch. V, n. 2.

[145] On the pagan mime shows, see: Franz Tinnefeld, "Zum profanen Mimos in Byzanz nach dem Verdikt des Trullanums (691)," *Byzantina* 6 (1974), 321–29.

[146] This view is corroborated in Callinicus' life of Hypatius of Rufinianae. Infra. Ch. VII, Sect. 1.

[147] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 52.

> was going to submit a project to you that will get us a knowledge of rhetoric, philosophy, scripture, and theology without hurting your legal studies or requiring much of your leisure time.

The systematic study of Christian writers was the essential element of askesis or discipline in this program. Zachariah went on:[148]

> We shall study law for the entire week except Saturday afternoon and Sunday. We shall assist at the lectures delivered by our masters during the other days of the week, review the material together, and then rest during the half-day preceding Sunday, the day civil law prescribes that we dedicate to God.

It was an asceticism without fasts, entailing only scholarship.[149]

The works to be read during these Sunday meetings were those of Athanasius of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, and others.[150] The initial phase of the program had an anti-Hellenic emphasis:[151]

> We began with the treatises that different ecclesiastical authors have written against the pagans. After this we read the *Hexaemeron* of Basil, then various of his works and letters, after that the treatise addressed to Amphilochius refuting Eunomius, and finally the address to young men in which he informs them how to profit from the writings of Hellenic authors.

The first group of readings seems to have included Athanasius of Alexandria's early work *Against the Hellenes*.[152] Zachariah refuses to mention the *Therapeutic for Hellenic Maladies* of Theodoret because of his role in developing Chalcedonian Christology. Even in the 490's Theodoret's work was still the most learned and comprehensive refutation of Hellenic belief and must have had a wide circulation. It is nevertheless possible that Severus and Zachariah consulted it. Basil's canonical letter to bishop Amphilochius of Iconium (c. 374) contains a code of Christian ethics and discipline, but also a discussion of remedies for Christians who had reverted to pagan cult practices after baptism.[153] Basil's *Address to Young Men on How To Draw Profit from Hellenic Literature* had for a long time been the standard work used by Christian catechists to set the rules for avoiding pagan error while studying the Greek *paideia*.[154] The book provided the schema for the rising Christian Sophistic,[155] which found popular expression in the *Greek Anthology* and in many surviving Christian funerary epigrams.[156] Basil's *Homilies on the Hexaemeron* elucidated in Attic style the Creation epic ordinarily read in the *koinē* Greek of the Septuagint. It sought to replace the elegant Hellenic theogonies, and complemented the decorative program of the church of the Theotokos from which Severus had drawn instruction.[157] Basil's *Contra Eunomium* will have established the perfect divinity of Christ for the catechumen.[158] Behind these works lay the prosaic but useful textbook on the Christian faith, the *Procatechesis* of Cyril of Jerusalem.[159]

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[148] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 52f.

[149] This scheme of asceticism was, of course, considerably more worldly than that devised by Basil of Caesarea. Cf. W.K. Clarke, *St. Basil the Great: A Study in Monasticism* (New York 1913).

[150] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 53.

[151] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 53f.

[152] Athanasius of Alexandria, *"Contra Gentes" and "De Incarnatione"*, ed. tr. R.W. Thomson (Oxford 1971), 2–133. Cf. Quasten, *Patrology* 3, 24ff.

[153] Basil of Caesarea, *Epp.* 188, 199, and 217 in: *Saint Basil: The Letters* (Deferrari 3).

Zachariah and Severus did not at first invite other men into their circle. Only later did they address the problem of extirpating the Hellenic cults among the law students.[160] They soon gained adherents. The most important of these was Evagrius of Samosata, who had studied rhetoric in the schools of Antioch. Badly injured in an urban riot that arose during a public spectacle, Evagrius, whose previous religious affiliation is uncertain, gave up the "passions of youth," avoided the circus, and began to attend all-night vigils in the church of St. Stephen the Protomartyr. Evagrius wanted to become a monk, but his father forced him to enter the law school at Berytus instead.[161] He became leader of the "holy association" that Severus and Zachariah had formed.[162] Other men soon joined, like Eliseus of Lycia, whose father had compelled him to study law unwillingly as well.[163] The association, which met every evening at the church of the Resurrection, soon gained some fourth-year law students as well: Anastasius of Edessa, Philip of Patara in Lycia, and Anatolius of Alexandria.[164] Later adherents included Stephen of Palestine and Zenodotus of Maiuma, the seaport of Gaza and home town of Zachariah. The latter had great affection for his younger countryman. Zenodotus became a talented barrister and practiced at the imperial court in Constantinople, but died an untimely death.[165] The members of the "holy association" had three things in common: education in the Greek *paideia* whether in Alexandria or their home towns, legal study in Berytus, and a serious interest in Christian theology. Evagrius their leader was harshly ascetic.[166] Severus soon became his disciple, emulating him as his type (τύπος) and icon (εἰκών) by abstaining from meat.[167] The "holy association" imitated the *philoponoi* of Alexandria by investigating divination and sorcery among the law students.

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[154] Supra, Ch. V, n. 76.

[155] For an important example, see: Trombley, "Boeotia in Late Antiquity," 225f.

[156] Two striking examples of the Christian sophistic are the hexameter periphrasis of the Psalms rendered into the old Ionian dialect by Apollinarios of Laodikea c. 361–363 (PG 33, 1313–1538) and Nonnus of Panopolis' Atticist version of the gospel of St. John (5th c.). *Paraphrasis in Ioannis Evangelium*, ed. A. Scheindler (Leipzig 1881). Cf. Quasten, *Patrology* 3, 380f.

[157] *Homiliae Novem in Hexaemeron*, PG 29, 4ff. Quasten, *Patrology* 3, 216ff.

[158] Basil's five books against Eunomius, published in two separate works, are found in: PG 29, 497–669. Quasten, *Patrology* 3, 209f.

[159] PG 33, 331–1128. Quasten, *Patrology* 3, 363–67.

[160] "Leaving our co-disciples [in law] to occupy themselves as seems best . . .," etc. Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 53.

[161] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 54f.

[162] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 56.

[163] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 55.

Magic arts of various kinds were common among the law students. A series of incidents came to the attention of the "holy association" shortly after its formation. Among the culprits were three notable personalities: John Foulon, a Christian from Thebes in Egypt; Leontius, a pagan who held the office of magister; and Chrysaorios of Tralles, another pagan. Zachariah admits that these men constituted only the representative sample of a much larger group.[168] John Foulon, although a Christian, seems to have been one of the chief instigators of their impieties.[169]

John Foulon's secret Hellenism did not become public knowledge until he sought to activate a love charm through the human sacrifice of one of his slaves, an act of murder under Roman law.[170] Zachariah got his information from Foulon's subsequent confession:[171]

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[164] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 55f.

[165] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 56.

[166] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 56.

[167] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 57.

[168] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 57f. Other participants in acts of sorcery and divination about whom Zachariah fails to disclose further information were a certain George of Thessalonike, Asklepiodotus of Heliopolis (Baalbek?), who was an ethnic Armenian, and "many others of their ilk."

[169] ἄθεαι πράξεις. Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 58, Syriac line 3.

[170] This inference is clear from two Constantinian laws which establish the principles for the disciplinary correction of slaves. In general the slave-owner should use his right of correction moderately (*nec vero inmoderate suo iure utantur*), but "shall be guilty of homicide if he should kill him (the slave) *voluntarily* with the blow of a cudgel or stone . . ." etc. (*si voluntate . . . occiderit*). This dictum covers all cases of gratuitous homicide. *Cod. Theod.* 9.12.1 (11 May 319). Cf. *Cod. Theod.* 9.12.2.

[171] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 58f.

> All the world thought they would effect a heinous murder. The rumor spread . . that they were thinking of sacrificing an Ethiopian slave belonging to the Theban at night at the Hippodrome. According to what they later said about this abominable crime, abhorrent to God, they wished to conciliate the *daimon* that was attached to them and, as they supposed, to get it to accomplish what they planned. Their *general* aim was to commit a crime no matter what. Their *particular* aim was forcibly to procure a certain woman who was then living chastely and with whom the slave's master was hopelessly in love. The cause was erotic love and the violence of the *daimones*. They therefore conducted the slave to the hippodrome in the middle of the night as though for some other purpose. At the moment when they were about to commit the crime, God, who is concerned with what we do, took pity on the unlucky slave and caused other people to enter that place. The culprits took flight, frightened as much by their own audacity as by the improvident incident. Thus the Ethiopian fortuitously got a chance to escape their murderous clutches set on killing him.

The sacrifice to the *daimon* to activate the love charm was the essential element, although animals usually sufficed as victims.[172] The hippodrome at Berytus was probably the regular spot for such nocturnal arts, which were merely a continuation of the curses, incantations, and sacrifices so abominated by the church that went on during the day.[173]

The mischance in the hippodrome led to John Foulon's exposure for sorcery. The slave, fearful for his life, reported the incident to one of his master's friends. The latter, a devout Christian, passed the word to Zachariah's "holy association", "seeking Christian help for the soul of his friend, who was besieged by *daimones*."[174] When the slave divulged the fact that Foulon owned magic books, the association decided to pay him a visit. The visitors included Zachariah and two men of influence and experience: Polycarp, a soldier in the local bureau (*officium*) of the Praetorian Prefect, and a barrister named Constantine, who knew Foulon personally.[175] They concerted beforehand to adopt a friendly and humble spirit, as though visiting Foulon to inspect his books in order to defend his reputation from the charge of practicing magic.[176] The books were discovered in comic fashion:[177]

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[172] Infra, this section.
[173] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 3.
[174] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 59.
[175] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 59f.
[176] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 60.
[177] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 61.

> Foulon answered our questions with self-assurance, because he had hidden his magic books under the seat of his chair, which he had made for them in the shape of a casket and which he had concealed from the sight of those who stood before him: "My friends, since such is your pleasure, examine my books as you wish." With this said, he had all the books brought in that were normally placed in sight in his house. Having found nothing of what we sought after examining them, Foulon's slave against whom they had plotted . . . furtively indicated his owner's chair to us, giving us to understand by signals that if we merely lifted up the plank, the books we sought would appear at once.

Upon the books' discovery John Foulon confessed and begged his accusers not to hand him over for criminal prosecution. He had little to fear, since the "holy association" aimed at "healing and saving the soul."[178] The incident illustrates the practice of the *philoponoi*, who preferred the amicable conversion of Hellenes to legal action that might subject the offender to confiscation or even execution.[179]

Proof of conversion consisted in John Foulon's burning the magic books that he owned. Zachariah inspected the manuscripts himself:[180]

> In the books were certain drawings of perverse *daimones*, barbaric names, and harmful, presumptuous commands replete with arrogance and quite fit for perverse *daimones*. Certain of the incantations were attributed to Zoroaster the *magus*, others to Ostanes the magician, others yet to Manetho.

The surviving magical papyri contain drawings of *daimones* grasping women in line with their function as erotic charms. A fourth-century text edited by Karl Preisendanz corresponds closely to those owned by John Foulon:[181]

> Love charm. The best burnt offering, of which there is none better. It leads men to women and women to men, and makes young women leave their homes in haste. Take a clean sheet of papyrus, write the following names, and draw the following figure [of the *daimon*] with

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[178] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 61.

[179] Monks adopted this policy as well. Cf. the cases of sacrifice and sorcery reported in Callinicus' life of Hypatius of Rufinianae. Infra, Ch. VII, Sect. 1. It was easier to confront the Hellene or crypto-Hellene with his offense openly in the hope of converting him than to initiate the arduous business of litigation, something that the Zenonian law on sacrifice demanded, but which seems usually to have been forgone. Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 6.

[180] Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 340, where Theodore of Sykeon gets the sorcerer Theodotus Kourappos to burn his magic books, recall his spells, and accept baptism.

[181] PGM XXXVI, (Preisendanz 2, 164f.).

> donkey blood. Take an article of property from the woman you desire, smear the papyrus sheet with gum soaked in water, affix it to the dry-heat room of the bath-house, and you will be amazed! Keep a grip on yourself. Do not let yourself be struck with fear. This is what should be written: "Come Typhon, you who are sitting at the upper gate! Iō Erbēth, Io Pakerbeth, Io Balchoseth, Io Apomps, Io sesenro, Io bimat, Iakoumbiai, aberramentho oulerthexanax ethrelyoōth memareba tou Seth. As you burn and are consumed by fire, so too will be the heart and soul of X., whose mother was X., until she comes loving me, my name being X., and she damply joins her female sexual organ to my male organ. Now! Now! Quickly! Quickly!"

The drawing accompanying the incantation depicts a *daimon* with a rooster's head holding a flail in its right hand and a human figure (the female object of the spell) in its left. John Foulon admitted that his own invocations had been without effect, as had been those of other persons who had attempted to seduce the woman with love charms:[182]

> Foulon promised to burn the books and ordered a fire to be made. He told us that he had fallen in love with a woman. Thinking he would triumph over her refusal to have intercourse with him by the help of these books, he turned to magic. He added that the magicians' artifice was impotent. Their promises were so vain that the woman hated him even more! Not only he but many other men had become familiar with magic for the sake of that woman. He also divulged the names of many others who owned magic books of this type. After the fire had been brought he cast the magic books into it with his own hands.

Foulon blamed the law student ethos in Berytus for his error:[183]

> He declared that he was in truth a Christian and the son of Christian parents, but that he had fallen into error during his stay there and had cultivated secular lusts to appease evil *daimones*.

With this done, the "holy association" gave thanks to God and sat down to eat, as the noon hour had come. They had brought box lunches with them in anticipation of a long session with John Foulon. Zachariah and the others observed him carefully to test his repentance:[184]

> We had some meat with us. We watched this man eat meat with us because it was said that those who take pleasure in magic and resort to perverse *daimones* abstain from it and consider this food unclean.

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[182] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 62.

[183] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 62. The Syriac has a sense different from Kugener's "et avait adoré les idoles."

[184] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 63.

It will be recalled that Proclus, an expert in theurgy, abstained from animal meats except occasionally for the sake of piety, that is, he ate sacrificial meats only.[185] Iamblichus of Chalkis (ob. c. 325–330) indicates in the *De Mysteriis* in a section on the preconditions for successful divination that contact with the bodies of unconsecrated or non-sacrificial animals vitiated the power of the minister.[186] This requirement of ritual purity implied the avoidance of animal meat before all acts of theurgy.

The Foulon incident thus came to an end. The "holy association" persuaded John Foulon to accompany them to the church of the apostle Jude to fortify his conversion through prayer and to get the prayers of the clergy there in his behalf.[187] The latter included Cosmas the presbyter and *paramonarios*, Menas of Caesarea in Cappadocia, a law student who had become a monk, and John Eudranes from Palestine. The last-named was[188]

> . . . a man who after studying law had taken up the "philosophic" (read religious) life. He made himself useful to the law students of the city as much by his morals as through the Christian books that he owned, shared, and loaned out.

Zachariah and his friends evidently hoped that John Eudranes would provide Foulon with some Christian texts and generally look after him, lest he apostasize again. As Foulon had divulged the names of other Hellenes among the law students, the "holy association" took up the task of tracking them down and left the work of exhortation and instruction to their friends at the church of St. Jude. The other Hellenes were known to Severus and Zachariah from their student days in Alexandria.[189]

The first opportunity to expose Hellenes came soon thereafter when a certain George of Thessalonike, the owner of a magic text, gave it to a scribe and asked him to reproduce it in the form of a codex.[190] The scribe immediately reported this to Martyrius the lector and the previously mentioned Polycarp. These men notified Severus and Zachariah, who in turn denounced the Hellenes to John the bishop of Berytus. The list of culprits included George of Thessalonike, Asklepiodotus of Baalbek-Heliopolis, Chrysaorios of Tralles, and a certain Leontius, a *magister* teaching law in Berytus, all of them on the list of practitioners of magic given by John Foulon. Their caprices had been the object of public outrage in the past. Bishop John called upon the imperial notaries in the *officium* at Berytus to cooperate with the "holy association" in exposing their activities:[191]

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[185] Supra, Ch. IV, Sect. 3.
[186] Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis* 6.1–3 (Des Places, 183–185).
[187] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 64f.
[188] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 63f.
[189] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 65.
[190] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 65f.

> The bishop enjoined us and the members of the clergy to examine all those men's books. The imperial notaries were with us. The entire city was in a state of uproar because [the Hellenes] were spending their time studying magic books instead of applying themselves to law, and because this Leontius did great harm through his paganism.

Public wrath fell particularly on Leontius because he had used his position as *magister* to manipulate the election of the city magistrates through Hellenic practices:[192]

> This Leontius was a man who knew how to deceive. Instead of practicing his primary profession, he constructed horoscopes and practiced divination. He announced to all who came to him their election to office as prefects. He also aided those who had recourse to idols. The art of his trickery was so great that an important man living in Byblos [became one of his dupes].

On one occasion Leontius predicted that a man's wife would bear him a son.[193]

The search and seizure of magic books led to street fighting amongst the citizens. The "holy association" deposited the books of George of Thessalonike and Asklepiodotos of Heliopolis-Baalbek in the center of the city. Warned by the noise, other Hellenes concealed their books. At this point Chrysaorios of Tralles, one of the Hellenes, called in the town hooligans to disrupt the searches for books. In reply a Christian named Constantine, who apparently managed a large estate in the *territorium* of the city, threatened to summon the villagers and field hands of the properties under his control to protect Zachariah and the clergy:[194]

> Chrysaorios raised trouble-makers against us from a group called the Poroi (?) and whom the law students call the "companions" (?), people with notorious habits who live in arrogance. They are often

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[191] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 66. Cf. Brooks, "Life of Severus" 469.

[192] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 66f.

[193] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 67.

[194] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 68. I have taken issue with Kugener's translation, in line with A.H.M. Jones' discussion of the management of estates, the key word being *parnasā*, which has the sense of "steward", "manager" (*oikonomos*) or "guardian" rather than "owner". Cf. Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 781–95. The Syriac word for "estate", *ūsiyā*, is simply the Greek *ousia* taken as a loan-word. Similarly, the word for "rustics" used here is *qūryayē* from the Greek *chōrikoi*.

> murderers and do not hesitate to use the sword. Because the entire demos feared God, believing he would rise up against these people and had promised to help us, Constantine of Beyrtus, the manager of an immense estate, threatened to call in his rustics.

The converging bands refused battle when Leontius agreed to surrender, after Zachariah and the "holy association" admitted the principle of converting sinners rather than killing them. Many of the "companions" were pagans to judge from their alliance with Chrysaorios to stop the destruction of magic books.[195] It is likely that the *territorium* of Berytus was Christianized c. 365–420, as was the Limestone Massif district east of Antioch.[196] In the 490's the rustics now entered the city on the side of the Christian bishop and civil officials to combat the pagan remnant, much as Hypatius of Rufinianae led an army to archimandrites to Chalcedon in Bithynia to disrupt the celebration of the Olympia.[197] Even so, public opinion, a "holy association," militant monks, clergy, and even an armed peasantry could not eradicate that urban pagan remnant, as Justinian's legislation in 529 and subsequent years demonstrates.

With the quelling of the uprising, the magic books could now be burned. Bishop John got the cooperation of the defensor of the city for this. He, along with the city officials, clergy, and "holy association" erected a great bonfire in a public square lying in front of the church of the Theotokos. It is clear that the civil officials of Berytus had begun taking instructions from their bishop about punishing the local Hellenes long before the time of Justinian, whose legislation incorporated an earlier law prescribing that course of action. The law in question, usually dated to 529, more probably belongs to the reign of Zeno in the years during the suppression of Illus' rebellion c. 481–488.[198] Its correspondence with the present incident is precise:[199]

> We command that our officials both at Constantinople and in the provinces go with all speed and search out according to the law, both on their own initiative and with the help of our God-beloved bishops, the teachers of the atheism of Hellenic cult, lest such acts occur any longer and that those who perform them would be punished. If the correction of such acts exceeds the competence of the local authorities, let these matters be brought to our attention, lest accusation and trial for the offenses be laid against the officials themselves.

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[195] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 68f.
[196] Infra, Ch. X, passim.
[197] Infra, Ch. VII, Sect. 1.
[198] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 6.
[199] *Cod. Iust.* 1.11.9. *prooem.*

Zachariah of Mytilene denounces the books for their "satanic signs" and "atheistic and barbarous arrogance". He then categorizes the different classes of magic spells found therein:[200]

> How one can set cities in turmoil, making the populace rise up and array fathers against their sons and grandchildren.
> By what means one might break up legitimate marriages and cohabitations.
> How one might win over a woman who wishes to live in chastity to illicit love by force.
> How one might attempt adultery and murder.
> How one might commit theft.
> In what manner one can compel judges to deliver a sentence of acquittal.

Public opinion and these documents both credited sorcerers with great powers to harness malevolent *daimones* for immoral, antisocial, and seditious aims. In the turbulent life of the cities of this period, such beliefs became a source of great anxiety. The destruction of the magic books therefore served a political purpose. It was not simply a matter undermining the position of nasty Hellenes suffering from conceit because of their education in their Greek *paideia*, but of blocking their supposed power to summon ancient divinities to bring down the entire social and institutional structure of the Christian empire, in this instance the *polis* of Berytus.

Zachariah of Mytilene reports that Severus took the lead in the work of destruction. He gained great popularity with the demos for this.[201] To judge from Zachariah's analysis of the event, the magic books' owners were not prosecuted. The "holy association" certainly repeated its argument that conversions must be voluntary, without civil coercion. There is no evidence that any of the Hellenes renounced their cult and became Christian. The aim of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities in Berytus was eradicating the dangers thought to be posed by sorcery rather than imposing religious conformity.

Zachariah of Mytilene's last example of the "holy association"'s sorcerer-hunting pertains to a group of itinerant magicians perhaps of Iranian or East Syrian origin who, upon reaching Berytus, even corrupted some of the regular clergy, a phenomenon more common than might be supposed.[202] If the men were not themselves

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[200] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 69f.

[201] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 70.

[202] For examples of clergy corrupted by sorcery, see: Trombley, *Survival of Paganism*, 102–104. There is also the very interesting case of the bishop of Tella-Constantina in Osrhoene, who was condemned at the Latrocinium of 449. A

Iranians, they thoroughly understood the marketability of bogus Persian magic. Zachariah dismisses their pitch in these terms:[203]

> When Darius, king of the Persians, came to this land and these places a long time ago, where cities existed before our time, he hid much gold, in fact many talents of gold. . . . They [the charlatans] had gotten the story from the account of the *magi* and other Persians.

Divination to discover hidden treasure was quite common in the Eastern Roman Empire in the fifth and sixth centuries. This reality lies behind the law of 2 March 390 given by Valentinian II, Theodosius I, and Arcadius which provided that persons "who discovered treasure-troves under the persuasion of some divinity or with fortune guiding them" might keep their gains (*eos, qui suadente numine vel ducente fortuna theusauros reppererint*).[204] If the pious emperors were thinking of the Christian God in using the term *numen*, it was sufficiently vague to legitimize any discoveries thought to have occurred under the influence of the sundry subterranean deities supposed in popular magic to yield up the secrets of the earth.[205] In this instance the Persian magicians summoned the spirits of the dead, who presumably knew the subsoil and subaqueous zones as well, to make the revelations. Zachariah calls their rites the "oracles of the dead", the Syriac equivalent of the Greek *nekromanteia*. Iranian religion did, in fact, encompass a cult of the dead, the Furdigan,[206] which had nothing to do with divination. This may nevertheless have given the entire dubious business of the Persian magic a more convincing air. The itinerants, knowing about Chrysaorios of Tralles' interest in magic from public rumor, approached him and found him credulous.[207]

Zachariah dwells at some length on the phenomena of this cult, into which the *paramonarios* of a Christian shrine called the Second

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Syriac fragment of the conciliar acta goes into exceptional detail about the cult. Ernest Honigmann, "A Trial for Sorcery on August 22, A.D. 449," *Isis* 35 (1944–45), 281–284.

[203] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 70f.

[204] *Cod. Theod.* 10.18.3. C. Pharr renders *numen* as "Divine Providence", but the law seems to have envisioned the cooperation of more than one divinity or *daimon*, in line with pre-Christian methods of treasure-hunting.

[205] A letter of Photius, patriarch of Constantinople (9th c.), relates how a group of rustics sacrificed a dog to the chthonic divinity Gē in order to get the earth to yield up its hidden wealth. When the divination failed, the men confessed their sin to the bishop, who passed on the story to Photius. Cf. infra, Ch. VII, n. 154.

[206] Menander Protector, Fr. 15 in *Historici Graeci Minores*, ed. Ludwig A. Dindorf, 2 (Leipzig 1871), 37, line 6. This festival celebrated the *frawasis*, the spirits who passed judgement on the souls of the dead. In Greek the festival was called the *nekuia*.

[207] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 71.

Martyrion was drawn. Chrysaorios engaged the man in conversation and awakened his interest in a share of "Darius' treasure".[208] The magicians claimed that they needed the precious metals contained in the church service vessels and the corpses of the dead buried in the martyrion to activate their divinatory rites. It might have been supposed that the Christian dead and liturgical vessels with crosses inscribed on them would, if anything, have interfered with summoning the *daimones* and spirits of the dead. Zachariah's rationalism prevented him from supposing this:[209]

> These vagabonds and magicians declared that they required silver objects for their scheme, first for going to the sea nearby in order to evoke the *daimones*, the guardians of the treasure-trove, by means of these objects, and secondly in order to practice necromancy ("oracles of the dead") at the tombs situated inside the church. The minister, driven by hope of gain and unworthy of those martyrs, yielded to Chrysaorios and helped them commit the sacrilege. For his part, Chrysaorios gave silver objects to certain of them [the charlatans] with which they did not hesitate to abscond after making some initial show of staying at the water's edge and evoking the *daimones*, the guardians of the imaginary treasure-trove, with these objects. As for the *paramonarios*, he took the silver censer from among the sacred vessels and gave it to the man who promised to execute the necromancy, evoking the spirits of the dead by force and learning from them where the treasure-trove was hidden. At the exact moment the magician began this daimonic invocation and was carrying the censer, God of the martyrs punished these people. He made the ground tremble under their feet until they were half dead from fear and watching to see if the entire church would cave in on top of them.

Berytus quite obviously suffered periodic earth tremors. Seismic activity finally destroyed the city in the great earthquake of 550/1.[210]

The publicization of this incident resulted in the elimination of several prominent Hellenes from the local limelight at Beirut. Poor folk often slept in the Second Martyrion. After being awakened by the earth tremor and the shouts of the culprits, they quickly spread the word about Chrysaorios' nefarious behavior and the sacrilege of the *paramonarios*, whose name Zachariah withholds. At the festival of John the Baptist which came shortly after this incident, there was another civil uprising in Berytus to protest the Hellenes' continued practice of magic and sorcery. Bishop John had the *paramonarios* implicated with the Iranian diviners apprehended and confined to a monastery for an unspecified term of exile.[211] Leontius the *magister*, the prominent Hellene mentioned in connection with a previous incident, fled Berytus to save his life from the rioters. He eventually accepted baptism at a church of St. Leontius the martyr in another city. The populace of Berytus readmitted him to the city when he arrived at the gate wearing the white garb of the newly baptized and begged their pardon for his sorceries.[212]

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[208] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 71.
[209] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 72.
[210] John Malalas, *Chronographia*, ed. L. Dindorf (Bonn 1831), 485.

Chrysaorios remained convinced Hellene, however, fancying that, as Zachariah puts it, he had survived "thanks to his *daimones*, magic arts, and wealth." He had resolved to return to his hometown Tralles in Caria, a city which, like Aphrodisias, seems to have had many Hellenes in the 490's.[213] If Zachariah is to be believed, Chrysaorios used magic to predict fair sailing weather but was disastrously deceived:[214]

> After he decided to return to his homeland, he hired a ship onto which he loaded all the magic books he had acquired on the word of well-informed men at a considerable cost in gold. He also embarked his law books and most of the silver objects he owned, as well as his children and their mother, who was his concubine. Chrysaorios ordered the shipmaster to sail at the moment Chrysaorios and other persons thought auspicious, after he had consulted a treatise on magic and the movement of the stars, and he made his own calculations. He intended to return to his homeland by the overland route. The ship sailed with the promise of the *daimones* and astrologers that it would be saved with all that it contained. But in spite of the magic and magic books, the ship was swallowed up by the sea, and nothing that Chrysaorios had embarked was saved.

The ship evidently put to sea during the summer sailing season.[215] It must have been a typical cargo-carrying roundship. Chrysaorios' magic served not only to restrain the Mediterranean storms and to prevent the mechanical failure of the ship's tackle, but also to determine the most favorable moment for sailing in light of the vagaries of chance and destiny. He may well have wondered afterward whether some defect of ritual had deprived him of his family and books. It is improbable that Chrysaorios' departure from Berytus left the imperial law school free of sacrifice and magic arts. Zachariah of Mytilene's narrative shifts elsewhere at this point. His object lay more in justifying Severus of Sozopolis' youthful behavior. The three exemplars of the Hellenes of Berytus reflect many other cases: John Foulon, a Christian addicted to Hellenic magic, was reformed; Leontius the *magister* accepted Christianity in order to be able to continue his career in Berytus; and Chrysaorios of Tralles returned to his native city because of public outrage at his failed magic scheme to acquire a treasure trove.

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[211] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 73. The maintenance of private prisons was forbidden by law, but the ecclesiastical authorities got around this. The law states: "If anyone after this confines a guilty person in a private prison (*si quis posthac reum privato carceri destinarit*), he shall be guilty of treason (*maiestas*)." *Cod. Theod.* 9.11.1 (30 April 388). The rule seems to have been aimed primarily at powerful persons (*potentes*). Powerful ecclesiastical institutions quite obviously fell into this category, and particularly monasteries. For another example, see infra, Ch. VII, Sect. 1.

[212] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 73.

[213] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 74. Infra, Ch. VI, Sect. 1 and 2.

[214] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 74.

[215] For maritime sailing, see: Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 867–71.

VI. Conclusion

The foregoing analysis has described the process by which the *philoponoi* brought the adherents of the Greek *paideia* into the framework of the Christian sophistic. The process affected both pagans and Christians, all of whom were exposed to the "corrupting" influence of Hellenic literature, religion, and theurgy. Looking back at the 480's from the perspective of 529, the *philoponoi* in some sense guaranteed the survival of the older cultural ethos by stressing its synthetic value for the newer Christian Atticist movement.[216]

This synthesis was the culminating point of a struggle that had been waged since the days of Athenagoras of Athens (ob. c. 177) and Origen (ob. c. 254), whose *Contra Celsum* summed up the Christian position on a wide range of issues, including *daimones* and sacrifice.[217] It had the great merit of studying Plato, and used the allegorical method to demolish Hellenic mythology and to establish the spiritual meaning of Christian texts.[218] The greatest Atticizer of the Christian sophistic was probably Apollinarios of Laodikea (ob. c. 390), who not only rendered the greater part of the Old and New Testaments into high-flown verse, prose, and dialogue—of which only his Psalms survive—but also wrote a treatise refuting Porphyrius of Tyre's polemic against Christianity.[219] Other such rebuttals of Porphyrius came from the pens of Eusebius of Caesarea (ob. 339) and Methodius of Olympus in Lycia (ob. 311).[220] Only the work of the latter survives.[221]

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[216] Werner Jaeger did not bring his study down past the 4th c. in *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Cambridge, Mass. 1961).

[217] Supra, Ch. IV, n. 5. *Daimones* are dealt with principally in Origen, *Contra Celsum* 8 (Chadwick, 469ff.).

[218] See the précis of Jaeger, *Christianity and Greek Paideia* 46ff., 127ff. On allegorizing Homer and other texts, see R.P. Hanson, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture* (London 1959), 55–62. See also Charles Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (Oxford 1913), 185ff.

[219] *Metaphrases in Psalma*, ed. A. Ludwich (Leipzig 1912). PG 33, 1627ff. Jerome, *Liber de Illustribus Viris* 104. PL 23, 741–742A-B. There were two Apollinarii, father and son.

Theodoret of Cyrrhus (ob. 458) was himself an exponent of the Christian sophistic, and set forth the parameters for all future criticism of pagan religion in his *Therapeutic for Hellenic Maladies* by drawing heavily upon the Greek philosophers, including the dreaded Porphyrius of Tyre.[222] As we have seen above, this important work was largely or perhaps only publicly ignored by the monophysite *philoponoi* of Alexandria, who could quite plausibly have put it to good use.[223] Theodoret had his own heroes in the Christian sophistic. Among them was Didymus the Blind, patriarch of Alexandria (ob. 398), whose achievement was quite remarkable:[224]

> Didymus, having been deprived of optical sense perception from childhood onward, partook of poetic and rhetorical studies. He received the sciences (*ta mathēmata*) through the faculty of hearing: arithmetic and geometry, astronomy and the syllogisms of Aristotle and the eloquence of Plato. [He did this] not as one learning the truth, but as one learning the weapons of truth against falsehood. He learned not only the grammar of Holy Writ, but also the concepts.

Another favorite of Theodoret's was Protogenes, a disciple of Eulogius, the hegumen of the monastery at Antinoe in the Thebaid. Protogenes set up a grammar school with the aim of Christianizing the youth of the city. He effected this partly by making "house calls" on his students when they fell ill:[225]

> Protogenes the admirable, having taught himself the grammar of Eunomios and having trained himself quickly in the art of writing, established himself as a teacher of boys after finding a suitable place and declaring it a school. He quickly taught them to write and instructed them in the divine sayings (*ta theia logia*). He dictated the Davidic songs to them and provided a suitable training for learning the apostolic teaching. When one of his pupils fell sick, he went to the boy's house, grasped the boy's right hand, and cast out the disease with a prayer. When the fathers of the other children learned this, they brought him to their houses and begged him to aid the sick. But

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[220] Jerome, *Liber de Inlustribus Viris* 81, 83, PL 23, 727–728A-B.

[221] On Eusebius, see Quasten, *Patrology* 3,333. On Methodius: Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* 2 (Utrecht-Antwerp: 1953), 137.

[222] Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Thérapeutique des maladies helléniques*, ed. tr. P. Canivet, 2 (Paris 1958), 485f.

[223] Supra, Ch. V, Sect. 5.

[224] Theodoret of Cyrrhus, HE 4.29 (Parmentier, 269f.).

[225] Theodoret, HE 4.18.8–10 (Parmentier, 241).

> Protogenes said he would not entreat God to drive away the illness before the sick person was deemed worthy of the gift of baptism. They submitted eagerly, for a yearning after health drove them on. They got health of mind and body through him.

Protogenes' method had a great deal in common that Zachariah of Mytilene practiced on Paralios of Aphrodisias. The *philoponoi* of the late fifth century placed less emphasis on the miraculous, however, and stressed rational argument instead. The element they all had in common seems to have been a genuine sense of ironic good humor and consideration for the vagaries of their younger contemporaries.

Even the Hellenists of Alexandria could look at themselves and their cult with a bitterly detached sense of futility. Palladas provides a case in point in describing the fate of Gessios, who invested too much faith in the oracle cult of Zeus Ammon. His shrine in the western desert was still operating in the first quarter of the sixth century and was eventually closed by Justinian.[226] Of Gessios Palladas writes:[227]

> When Gessios learned the fraud of the oracle at Ammon and was already near death in a foreign land, he blamed his own judgement and science, and those who are persuaded by irrational astrologers.

His search for high office resulted in an untimely death, although its precise circumstances are unknown. As Zachariah of Mytilene has it, Chrysaorios of Tralles lost his fortune and family thanks to a fallacious oracle promising fair sailing weather.[228] Palladas' poetry owed its survival in part and incorporation into the *Greek Anthology* to the consistency of its picture of declining Hellenism with that given by its archenemies, the *philoponoi*. The prevailing mood of despair in the old cults was greater than Zachariah permits us to see in the activities of the younger Horapollon and Asklepiodotos, and certainly lies behind Damascius' upbeat treatment of the subject in his *Life of Isidore*. After all, this Horapollon eventually converted to Christianity.[229]

For their part, the leaders of the Christian sophistic continued to synthesize the Greek *paideia* with their own religious ideas. Isidore of Pelusium (ob. 435), to take one example, condemns "the Hellenes' invention of the gods" (τὰς [μὲν] Ἑλλήνων θεοποιίας) in the theogonies, in the Orphica, and in the works of Hesiod and Homer.[230] Monkish opinion aside, the Christian Marcus Argentarius (6th c.) begins an epigram with the observation: "As I was once turning over the pages of a volume of Hesiod in my hands."[231] All could agree that the Greek epic still had an immense power to persuade, and to give legitimacy even to the expression of Christian opinion. The argument of a now lost book quoted in the *Greek Anthology* is self-evident proof of this cultural fact:[232]

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[226] Procopius, *Buildings* 6.2.14–20 (Dewing 7, 368f.). Cf. SEG 26 (1976–77), 1763–1795.

[227] *Greek Anthology* 7.683, 684, 687.

[228] Supra, Ch. V, Sect. 5.

[229] Pierre Chuvin, *A Chronicle of the Last Pagans*, 110.

> The book of Patricius, the God-fearing priest, who performed a great task, composing from the works of Homer a glorious song of splendid verses, announcing the deeds of the invincible God.

There follows a summary of the New Testament in Epic Greek. This sort of thing was admittedly a common exercise and rather easy to come by, as Apollinarios of Laodikea had shown in the fourth century. It nevertheless gave the Christian scriptures a hyper-*koinē* sophistication that lent comfort to recently converted Hellenes accustomed to the expression of religious sentiment, theology, and ritual in the ancient dialect. Nonnus of Panopolis' paraphrase of the Gospel of John (5th c.) provides another case in point.

The Berytus of Severus' and Zachariah's day perished in 551 from a great earthquake. The damage was so great that the dead were still referred to as being left in the ruins nine years after the event.[233] The author of the epigrams describing this, John Barboukallos, a Christian, composed another in which the pilot of a merchant ship tries to avoid the dry harbor because it is no longer a place of "hospitable gods" (ξενίοις θεοῖσιν).[234] Zachariah of Mytilene might have taken this as a fitting compliment to the successful eradication of the gods, or rather *daimones*, of sorcery and divination by the "holy association" in the 490's.[235] This happy state of affairs is put somewhat differently by Agathias of Myrina in another epigram (ante 551). It sums up the hopes and ambitions of many students in the decades after Severus and Zachariah:[236]

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[230] Isidore of Pelusium, Ep. 1.21 ("To Ammonius Scholasticus"), PG 78, 196B. Surprisingly little has been done on this author's role in the Christian Sophistic. L. Bayer, *Isidors von Pelusium klassische Bildung* (Paderborn 1915). G. Redl, "Isidor von Pelusion als Sophist," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 47 (1928), 325–32.

[231] *Greek Anthology* 9.161.

[232] Quoted from *Greek Anthology* 1.119 (Paton 1, 50f.).

[233] *Greek Anthology* 9.425, 426. Averil Cameron, *Agathias* (Oxford 1970), 138f.

[234] *Greek Anthology* 9.427.

[235] Supra, Ch. V, Sect. 5.

[236] *Greek Anthology* 1.35. Agathias studied law in Constantinople. Cameron, *Agathias* 140f.

> Aemilius the Carian and with him John, Rufinus of Alexandria, and Agathias of Asia, having completed the fourth year of their legal studies, O archangel, dedicate to you, O blessed one, your own painted image, praying that their future may be happy. Make yourself manifest in the direction of their hopes!

Both the legal and cultural tradition of the Roman East was now in the lands of the Christian sophistic to stay.

The legal tradition had come a long way since the earliest codifications of Greek law. It is of interest to note one provision from the law code of Teos (c. 470 B.C.):[237]

> Whoever makes destructive poisons against Teians, whether he be a public man or a private citizen, the aforementioned shall be destroyed, both he himself and his family.

The ancient law and the drift of events at Berytus in the 490's A.D. find a point of conjuncture in some sense in the person of Chrysaorios of Tralles once again, whose family and personal fortune perished by shipwreck after his own "destructive sorceries" (φάρμακα δηλητήρια in the phrase of the law, where φάρμακον can mean either a *maleficium* or a draught of poison). Figuratively, at least, many other families like that of Paralios of Aphrodisias were being disrupted or destroyed, but only because of divided religious allegiances. These schisms would eventually yield to Christianity because of its great cultural adaptability and superior organizational structure.[238]

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[237] *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century B.C.*, ed. R. Meiggs and D. Lewis (Oxford 1969), no. 30 (23), lines 1–5.

[238] MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire*, 134–37.

A homily of Severus of Antioch survives in a Coptic version that corroborates what I sought to prove above that this eventual leader of the monophysite church was at best an *ethnophrōn*, or "pagan-minded" catechumen, during his student days in Alexandria. The homily, cited herein as the *Laudatio S. Leontii*, is published with text and translation in: G. Garitte, "Textes hagiographiques orientaux relatifs à S. Leonce de Tripoli: II. L'homélie copte de Sevère d'Antioche," *Le Muséon* 79 (1966) 335–86. It concerns the martyrdom of St. Leontius during the Great Persecution (*Laudatio* 5.1) and certain subsequent miracles at his shrine in Tripoli.

Severus makes direct admission of his own preference for Hellenic literature, but avoids mention of sacrifice: "And I know many of the young men who devoted themselves to Roman law in that turbulent city, that is Berytus, and they went off to his city (i.e. Tripoli) to pray, and speedily left their vain erudition (*paideusis*) and way of life, and purified their minds of Hellenic myths. They were changed for the better and were converted from those (myths) to a life full of wisdom and to conversation with the blessed monks. And I was one of them. For I was still at that time in that city. I heard of many miracles and cures that the blessed martyr made. My heart was moved in me, or rather philanthropic God moved my rational faculty that I should run to the *martyrion* of St. Leontius and pray. So I went out

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from the city of Berytus, I and a friend of mine who was a *scholastikos*, and we went to the martyr's holy place (*topos*) and prayed. Moreover, I prayed separately because I was still (*eti*) a pagan (*Hellēn*)(*cum adhuc essem gentilis*). I prayed thus: 'St. Leontius, holy martyr, pray to your God in my behalf that He would save me from the cult of the Hellenes and from the customs (*synētheia*) of my fathers.' That night a great mystery was revealed to me of which I am not worthy and of which I dare not speak. And so the God of the all, Christ Jesus, converted me from the seduction of the Hellenes through the prayers of the martyr St. Leontius and called me to the morally pure life of monasticism" (*Laudatio* 4.1–6).

His need for "purification" (*katharizein*) from the Greek *paideia* through conversation with monks reflects the experience of Paralios of Aphrodisias, who was tormented by his knowledge of Greek literature, religion, and magic after his conversion. More important yet are two reminiscences of the quasi-Justinianic law on Hellenic religion, which I have assigned instead to c. 481–88, the reference to "philanthropic God" and to "running to the *martyrion*" of St. Leontius (*Cod. Iust.* 1.11.10 *prooem.* and 1.11.10.1). This is significant, because the sermon was delivered on 18 June 513, fully *sixteen years* before the edict of 529. These phrases and others had been in currency for some time, and, as I have argued earlier (Ch. I, Sect. 6, and in Appendices II and III), they most probably belong to a decree of emperor Zeno during the rebellion of Illus.

There is a second story told in the homily that has a bearing on the problem of *Ritenchristianisierung*: "A certain man . . . in the villages (*pagi*) around the *martyrion* of St. Leontius promised to bring a rooster as a gift to the place (*topos*) of the holy martyr St. Leontius. Since they (i.e. the villages) had passed out from idolatry (*-eidōlon* in the Coptic text) not much time before this, therefore a bird of this kind was brought to the martyr according to ancient custom (κατὰ συνήθειαν in the original Greek)" (*Laudatio* 12.2–3). The narrative goes on to describe the vengeance taken on a soldier who tore the offering away from the man on his way to the *martyrion*. It is said that the bird was turned to stone as the soldier prepared to eat it, and was later left in the chapel as a sign of the martyr's power (*Laudatio* 12.12). The story may be an aetiological myth to explain the offering of a stone rooster to the shrine, but it bears firm testimony to the fact that the rustics made offerings to the Christian God in the same manner as to their former divinities. It should not be surprising, then, that pre-Christian liturgies were wholly adapted to the new religion as well (cf. supra, Ch. II, Sect. 4, and infra, Ch. VII, Sect. 2). The rustic making the offering had evidently come in from the parts of Mt. Lebanon. As we shall see, this area still had many pagans in it straight through into the mid-6th c. (Infra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 2). Upon becoming a Christian, the man continued the practice of bringing a rooster to the shrine as a gift (*dōron*) to the martyr (and hopefully the Christian God), the difference being that he no longer sacrificed it on an altar, but left it to the presbyter (*Laudatio* 12.8) or *oikonomos* (*Laudatio* 13.8) of the place, and so aided the clergy or *peregrini* staying in the hospice there. The shepherds and farmers living round about the *martyrion* evidently became Christian under the influence of the martyr cult (*Laudatio* 13.1–6). Severus' homily is thus an important witness to the Christianization of the western slopes of Mt. Lebanon in the late 5th c.

A quasi-monotheistic acclamation associated with St. Leontius' first miracle acquired currency during the 4th or 5th c. It ran: "Truly great is the power of the God of the Christians! Great is the power of Christ Jesus, the God of Leontius" (*Laudatio* 8.16). Garitte's Latin translation of the Coptic text is rendered quite easily back into Greek (ἀληθῶς μεγάλη ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Θεοῦ τῶν Χριστιανῶν. Μέγας Χριστὸς Ιησοῦς, ὁ Θεὸς τοῦ Λεοντίου). It will be recalled that "the god of X . . ." is a common Semitic pagan formulary that turns up in the inscriptions of Syria and Arabia, as for example "Zeus Helios the invincible god of Aumos" (Deir el-Leben, Hauran, 320 A.D.) (Waddington 2393–95) and "the god of Arkesilaos" (Frikyā, Apamene, 324 A.D.) (Infra, Ch. X, Sect. 6). In the former

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instance, Aumos was the priest in past time of a cult whose divinity simply acquired the name of its adherent. Without pressing the grammatical construction too far, it becomes evident that the "God of St. Leontius" had displaced the previous Baal or Hellenized divinity not only in fact, but also through his titlature. I have not been able to discover any pagan formularies of this type in the Mt. Lebanon district as of this writing, which is perhaps a caution.

CHAPTER SIX

APHRODISIAS

Aphrodisias, the "holy city" of Aphrodite, provides the most striking epigraphic evidence to date on the slow decline of Hellenic religion. As with Athens, the complete Christianization of the decurion class came quite late, between 450–529, insofar as the inscriptions permit us to judge. These texts concur with the statements of the Christian Zachariah of Mytilene and the pagan Damascius, who both mention or imply the existence of pagan sophists and decurions during this period.[1] Public Hellenism as expressed in the inscriptions died out or went underground only after the publication in 529 of Justinian's law requiring the baptism of all pagans inside the empire by the end of a three-month grace period, under the threat of confiscating the estates of those who failed to comply.[2] The inscriptions of this period have now been brought together in a single volume by Charlotte Roueché.[3]

I. Hellenic Religion in Society and Culture

Aphrodisias was the metropolis or provincial capital of Caria, the southwesternmost eparchy of Late Roman Asia Minor. An inland city, Aphrodisias maintained contact with the Aegean basin and Mediterranean beyond by way of the fertile Maeander river valley. The Greek fertility goddess Aphrodite gave her name to this "holy city", her cult being celebrated at an inner-city temenos which the Christian bishops succeeded in occupying only in the late fifth century, probably as a consequence of the failure of Illus' abortive rebellion against emperor Zeno between 481–88. Many urban Hellenes of the philosophical and rhetorical schools at Athens, Aphrodisias, and elsewhere had supported the losing side during this civil war.[4] One of the sanctions applied to these political dissidents was the final closure, demolition, or remodeling into churches of their beloved temples with the removal of the cult effigies, notwithstanding the artistic value of the statuary and architecture. The so-called temple-church at Aphrodisias arose inside the temenos as a consequence of this in the late fifth century.[5] The economic motives for inner-city temple conversions of this sort have been discussed above in connection with events at Apamea in Second Syria and Gaza in First Palestine.[6] At Aphrodisias this saw the removal, as well, of such sexually intriguing statuary as the "Birth of Aphrodite," in which the goddess assumes a cheese-cake pose.[7] The city had other cults as well. Of these, the worship of the chthonic river deity of the Maeander had survived into the late fifth century, as Damascius relates.[8]

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[1] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 3 and Ch. V, Sect. 4. The inscriptions of Aphrodisias have yet to be used systematically in assessing the decline of Hellenic religion, not having been available to Johannes Geffcken for his epoch-making study *The Last Days of Greco-Roman Paganism*.

[2] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 6.

[3] Charlotte Roueché, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity* (London 1989).

[4] Supra, Ch. V, Sect. 4. Cf. Rudolf Asmus, "Pamprepios, ein byzantinischer

The pagan city councillors, who owned extensive estates in the fertile Maeander basin, enjoyed official toleration of their cults, if privately conducted, from the governors of Caria, who maintained their *officium* at Aphrodisias. Imperial officials of the Hellenic faith found particular favor amongst the local decurions. Among the former was Flavius Eutolmius Tatianus, Praetorian Prefect of Oriens 388–392, who had been responsible for stopping the demolition of temples carried out by his predecessor Maternus Cynegius, and, it appears, the amnesty granted to the pagan rioters who had barricaded themselves inside the Serapeum of Alexandria in 391.[9] His name was erased from three great inscriptions erected in honor of Theodosius the Great during the tenure of Rufinus, the next Praetorian Prefect of Oriens.[10] It is unclear if the motive for the

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Gelehrter und Staatsmann des 5. Jahrhunderts," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 22 (1913), 336, and Bury, LRE 1, 398f., n. 5.

[5] Robin Cormack, "The Temple as Cathedral," *Aphrodisias Papers 1: Recent Work on Architecture and Sculpture* (Ann Arbor 1990), 83f. Cormack prefers a date around the middle or second half of the fifth century, based on the information of the Theodosian Code and the style of the chancel slabs of the Christian shrine built in the temple. Ibid., p. 84 and Fig. 6c. See also the arguments of R.P.C. Hanson, who finds practically no evidence for the conversion of standing temple buildings into churches until *after the Theodosian law of 435*. "The Transformation of Pagan Temples into Churches in the Early Christian Centuries," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 23 (1978), 257–267. See esp. p. 263.

[6] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 3, and Ch. III, Sect. 4.

[7] For a photo and brief description, see: Kenan T. Erim, *Aphrodisias: City of Aphrodite* (London 1986), 135. The statue of the "cheesecake" Aphrodite is found on the pediment of the basilica. Her legs are crossed, as she holds her long hair in widely outstretched hands. Two admiring, or perhaps leering, Tritons support the shell. The sculpture dates from the 3rd c. A.D.

[8] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 3.

[9] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 3.

[10] Roueché, nos. 25–27.

defacements was political (i.e. prefectural politics) or religious.[11] This *damnatio memoriae* was seemingly reversed after Rufinus' assassination in 395.[12] It was, however, left to a grandson to reerect an old statue of Tatian c. 400–450.[13] If filial piety dictated this, the historical memory of the Aphrodisian Hellenes, who were a powerful force in provincial politics, condoned and welcomed it. It was Tatian after all who had protected their shrines, temple buildings, and statuary from Theodosius I's vengeance for four years' time (between 388–392). One discerns this faintly in the epigram set up with the statue: "Tatian, who saved the cities with just administrative rulings" (Τατιανὸς θεσμοῖς τε δίκης πτολίεθρα σαώσας) and "who drove deadly ruin from Caria" as an "advocate" (Καρῶν ἐκ γέης ὅς ἀπήλασε λοίγιον ἄτην . . . ἀρωγός).[14] Tatian's family still had power and influence in Aphrodisias c. 400–450. There is no reason to suppose that they had become Christian.

It is probable that the fourth-century governors of Caria were Hellenes, like those of Achaea, because of their need to work closely and sympathetically with the largely pagan city council and provincial aristocracy residing in Aphrodisias. We know of a certain governor named Helladius (ante 350?) who held such titles as "refounder of the splendid city"[15] and, significantly, "the pure" (Ἑλλάδιος ὁ ἁγνός), a cultic term referring to ritual purity.[16] A later governor, one Flavius Quintilius Eros Monaxios, a good Hellenic name, administered Caria in the last years of Constantius II (c. 355–360).[17] With the other governors ambiguity prevails.[18] The first official inscription to bear a cross belongs to 379–386, which the Carian provincial council (composed of many landed magnates) erected in honor of Aelia Flacilla Augusta, the first wife of emperor Theodosius the Great.[19] It was a gesture to the family of the supreme legislator against paganism. No cross appears again on any public inscription (as opposed to ecclesiastical) at Aphrodisias for another century. The mid-fifth century saw a governor named Dulcitius to whom the Aphrodisians handed the civic titles of agonothete and Maiumarch (ἀγωνοθέτην καὶ . . . Μαιουμάρχην).[20]

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[11] Roueché, 50f.
[12] Bury, LRE 1, 113.
[13] Roueché, no. 37.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Roueché, no. 17.
[16] Roueché, no. 18.
[17] Roueché, no. 19.
[18] Roueché, nos. 20–22.
[19] Roueché, no. 23.
[20] Roueché, no. 40.

Even Christian governors of the mid-fifth century were not above sponsoring games of a semi-religious character like the Olympia that seemed to condone sacrifice.[21] The Maiuma was a sort of water-festival involving pre-Christian fertility rites that fifth-century bishops repeatedly condemned.[22] It was celebrated in large pools. For Hellenes there would have been private sacrificial banquets.[23] Nor does another inscription honoring Dulcitius, erected by the chief of the governor's bureau at Aphrodisias (*princeps officii* = πρῶτος στρατίης) bear a cross.[24] We might reckon him a Hellene or "religiously indifferent" pace Alan Cameron. There is no reason to believe Dulcitius a strong advocate of the new religion, whether in public or private.

Dulcitius' near contemporary as governor (for both men helped rebuild the East Agora Gate) is the first identifiably Christian governor of Caria c. 450. This was Flavius Ampelius, a lawyer (σχολαστικός) who also held the title of "father of the city" (πατὴρ τῆς πόλεως), one which indicates his responsibility for undertaking urban building projects.[25] It was emphatically an honorific title. Flavius Ampelius had the distinction of insulting the Hellenes of Aphrodisias in one of his building inscriptions by dedicating the work to "the good fortune of the splendid metropolis of the Stauropolitans."[26] Stauropolis, "City of the Cross," was the Christian name of Aphrodisias used as the place-name of the see by bishops who loathed putting down the name of the obscene goddess in their correspondence and other documents. The governor here took responsibility for "fixing the cross" on the city gate, in the form of nomenclature, much as the bishop performed a similar function by erecting the cross on the site of a new church (σταυροπήγιον).[27] The Ampelius inscription is incised with three crosses. Such tactics might work at the city's edge, but not on the public buildings at the hub of urban social life in this largely Hellenic city. In the repair work on the *palaestra* or wrestling school that took place two years later, a governor (whose name is justifiably restored to the fragmentary text as Flavius Ampelius) offers the good work "to the good fortune of the splendid metropolis of the Aphrodisians."[28] Even a rigidly Christian governor might thus compromise his principles for the sake of getting along with city councillors equally adamant in their Hellenic culture and religion.

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[21] Infra, Ch. VII, Sect. 1.

[22] The "most Christian" emperors recognized the necessity for public spectacles in the cities of the empire. The permission given for the Maiuma to be celebrated by a law of 25 April 396 issued at Constantinople was rescinded three and a half years later. The text of the two laws is instructive: "It has pleased our clemency that the joy of the Maiuma be restored to the provincials, so long, that is, as decorum is kept and modesty is preserved by morally unobjectionable practices (. . . *ita tamen, ut servetur honestas et verecundia castis moribus perseveret*). *Cod. Theod.* 15.6.1. These minimal requirements were not kept up, for a law of the coemperors Arcadius and Honorius, given at Constantinople (2 October 399), ordered the same Praetorian Prefect, Caesarius, to suppress the Maiuma in the cities under his jurisdication: "We allow sportive arts to be celebrated, lest dejection be caused by overzealous regulation. We flatly refuse, however, that which lays legal claim to the name of impudent license, the Maiuma, a foul and obscene spectacle" (*procax licentia . . . foedum adque indecorum spectaculum*). *Cod. Theod.* 15.6.2. The new law sought the suppression of the display of women's naked bodies in the swimming phase of the festival. It cannot have eluded the legislators, however, that private sacrifice accompanied the spectacle. See next note.

[23] This is my own inference, based on C. Roueché's analysis and the evidence that has come to light in the present work.

[24] Roueché, no. 41.

[25] Roueché, 77, and nos. 42–44.

[26] Roueché, no. 42.

Flavius Ampelius also remodeled the nymphaeum or fountain complex of Aphrodisias. For this act Pythiodorus, a rhetorician of Tralles, composed an epigram of thanksgiving to the Christian governor. It is addressed to him in the name of the Nymphs, who fictively speak in the first person.[29] The verses owe more to mythology than to cult, yet a small cross was incised above them when the inscription was erected. The Christian governor of Caria knew how to accept compliments decorously, even when given with Hellenic style and intent. Pythiodorus, with a pagan theophoric name, was probably a religious Hellene, although pagans often kept their old names during the catechumenate and after baptism. Whatever position one takes about Pythiodorus, the men of Aphrodisias certainly required the Nymphs babbling in the waters and the governor needed his cross.

By c. 500 the use of Christian symbols on the governor's building projects at Aphrodisias had become a matter of course, as reflected in the inscription of Flavius Palmatus.[30] Yet the provincial assembly (οἱ Κᾶρες in their own phrase) studiously avoided it.[31] Between c. 450–500 the governors, now most often Christian, became increasingly frank about their own religion and that of the empire. The Carian provincial assembly, now a declining bastion of Hellenism, kept correctly to the old way of doing things.

The imperial inscriptions at Aphrodisias from c. 500 onward reflect the triumph of the new religion. For example, a group of acclamations addressed to emperor Anastasius I (491–518) includes the significant statement: "The faith of the Christians conquers" (Νικᾷ ἡ πίσ[τις τῶν] Χριστιανῶν).[32] I doubt that its inclusion in the Aphrodisian context is accidental and without polemical intent toward the local pagans. As will be seen, a steep demographic decline of Hellenes amongst the city councillors and provincial magnates came between c. 450–500. The fact that such inscriptions as the present one could be erected without insult to the majority of Carian grandees reflects a demographic reality. A somewhat later Justinianic acclamation confirms the trend. It names Albinus the senator and citizen of Aphrodisias (φιλόπατρι Ἀλβῖνε λαμπρ(ότατε)). It begins with the phrase "One God for the whole world" (εἶς τὸν (cross) κόσμον ὅλον εἶς ὁ Θεός).[33] If stereotypically formal, this phrase fits the context of declining polytheism at Aphrodisias. Did parties of dissenting Hellenes who had supported Illus in 479–488 still survive in the early sixth century? It is certain that Justinian's policy of political consolidation aimed at crushing the provincial elites. The laws permitting confiscation as a punishment for sacrifice in the Justinianic codification of 532 made eliminating pagans fairly easy. Did anti-imperial cliques among the Carians trouble the imperial favorite Albinus? The acclamation advises that "envy fails to vanquish fortune" (ὁ φθόνος τύχην οὐ νικᾷ)[34] and, intriguingly: "The whole city says this: 'Your enemies to the river. May great God provide this'."[35] At first sight the acclamation refers to the punishment of drowning in a sack administered to parricides under old Roman customary law.[36] Be this as it may, the great God of the city

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[27] *Euchologion*, ed. J. Goar, 2nd ed. (Venice 1730), 485 and 488.

[28] Roueché, no. 43.

[29] Roueché, no. 38.

[30] Roueché, no. 62.

[31] Roueché, no. 63.

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[32] Roueché, no. 61.

[33] Roueché, no. 83.

[34] Roueché, no. 83, xiv

[35] Roueché, no. 83, xi.

[36] The traditional Roman law on parricides was revived by Constantine the Great in a decree given at Carthage (16 November 318), and was incorporated into the Theodosian Code, which states the issue and penalty in dramatic wise: "If any person should hasten the fate of a parent or son or anyone of his affection [by reason of kinship], which lies under the title of parricide (*quae nuncupatione parricidii continentur*), whether he achieved it secretly or openly, he shall not be subdued by the sword or by fire or by any other customary punishment, but shall be sewn into a leather sack, and, gripped within its deadly confines, he shall share the companionship of serpents and, as the nature of the district permits, be cast into the neighboring sea or river (*et, ut regionis qualitas tulerit, vel in vicinum mare vel in amnem proiciatur*), so that while living he may begin to do without the intimacy of the elements, that, just as the sky would be taken away from him while alive, the earth should be taken away when he is dead." *Cod. Theod.* 9.15.1. This remained the law on parricides until the Justinianic codification, when the law was renewed. *Cod. Iust.* 9.17.1.

(ὁ μέγας θεός) was the Christian one and no longer Aphrodite. Yet the Maeander river god was still worshipped in the sixth century.[37] To draw the point more finely, the acclamation had certain religious undertones. The *polis* belonged to the pro-Justinianic Albinus, the urban artisans and church, the *territorium* of the city to the dissident landed magnates, farmers, and cult of the chthonic deities, as John of Ephesus' sixth-century account of paganism in Caria strongly suggests.[38] One need not be drowned in the Maeander's waters to belong there.[39] But what of the city councillors of Aphrodisias?

II. Class Status and Christianization

The inscriptions demonstrate that the decurion class of Aphrodisias remained largely pagan until the second half of the fifth century. One must allow some latitude for the random survival and attrition of evidence through time in making this assessment. Seven families or individual persons are attested having possible or emphatic connections with the Hellenic faith. They continue to be mentioned at least through the early reign of Justinian, but possibly longer (c. 528–558).[40] Christian decurions appear in smaller numbers, a mere three. The first of the latter comes only in the late fifth century. It is my own view that the pagan Aphrodisians' cultural and religious views were so deeply entrenched and their local wealth so great that the ordinary incentives of imperial titles and career advancement had little appeal and no effect as vehicles of Christianization. It was the return of certain native Aphrodisians in the 490's after being educated in Alexandria and converted to Christianity by the *philoponoi* who tipped the scales in favor of the new religion. The lower classes, by contrast, had begun to accept the new religion before this time, but not in large numbers before c. 400. Let us consider the epigraphic evidence for these propositions.

The pagan city councillors are known mainly from funerary and honorific inscriptions. They have mostly traditional Hellenic names. The make-up of this group includes: Arkimos son of Damocharis (4th c. or later), Zeno (c. 300–350), Eupeithios (mid-late 4th c.), Alexander (late 4th–5th c.), Asklepiodotos (late 5th c.), Pytheas (late 5th c.), an unnamed eighteen year-old woman (4th c.

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[37] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 3. The *daimon* of the Maeander river was compelled to yield up its captives by the more powerful divinity of the sun.

[38] Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 330–334.

[39] Supra, Ch. VI, n. 37.

[40] Roueché, no. 157.

or later), and Euphemia (6th c.). One can do little about inscriptions that lack signs of Christian cult except presume in most cases that the person erecting the stele saw no reason to distinguish himself or the person honored from his surroundings on questions of religious belief. In the fourth and fifth centuries, when the city councillors and their families remained mostly pagan, such texts may be safely reckoned as pagan. From c. 450–500 onward, Christians began to distinguish themselves from Hellenes in honorific and funerary inscriptions by adding inscribed crosses. From this one might suppose that persons who avoided using the cross were either Hellenes or indifferent to religious display. Either way, the chances are that these latter texts represent either pagans or persons living on the fringes of the Christian catechumenate. These suppositions are hypothetical rules of interpretation, all of them subject to modification if new evidence arises. Each archaeological site, whether Athens, Aphrodisias, or the villages of Djebel Hauran in the Provincia Arabia, provides a unique local cultural context from the hermeneutical standpoint and must therefore be understood in its own terms before bringing in comparative data from other localities.

Indications of cult and belief exist on many of the pagan decurions' inscriptions at Aphrodisias. The earliest of these is probably that of Flavius Zeno (c. 300–350), an imperial count who held the local office of high-priest (ἀρχιερεύς).[41] Emperor Maximinus Daia (c. 311–313) had established a system of high-priests and priests to supervise the cult and temple finances of each province and city, a system which Julian the Apostate revived during his brief reign as Augustus in the East (361–363).[42] Flavius Zeno could have lived at any time during this period, as no reason exists to doubt the usefulness of these arrangements or their continuity between the years of Maximinus and Julian. Flavius Zeno's title of high-priest has been erased from the inscriptions.[43] It is conceivable that one of Flavius Zeno's descendants did this after the family had accepted Christianity, but this is speculative, Erasures cannot be dated without external evidence. His *immediate* descendants were *not* Christians, as they set up a second inscription cut in florid fourth-century uncials that commemorates his high-priesthood. His will stipulated the erection of this memorial (κατὰ διαθήκας διὰ τῶν ἑαυτ(οῦ) παίδων ἀνέθηκαν).[44] If his family was typical, it will have accepted Christianity in the late fifth century or even later, as will be seen below. Flavius Zeno is the last high-priest of any cult attested at Aphrodisias.

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[41] Roueché, nos. 11 and 12.
[42] Roueché, 29.
[43] Roueché, no. 11.
[44] Roueché, no. 12.

Three other Hellenes belong to the fourth-century phase of Aphrodisias' religious history. The city councillors set up a statue to "the wise Eupeithios," who was perhaps a local sophist or teacher of rhetoric (τὸν σοφὸν . . . Εὐπείθιον . . . στήσατο),[45] a profession beyond doubt dominated by Hellenes at this time. The rather vacuous funerary text of Arkimos son of Damocharis "who left life with honor in [public] works and all else" is doubtless pre-Christian (4th c. or later).[46] His works identify him as a decurion. Another magistrate named Alexander was praised for his justice (Ἀλεξάνδροιο δικαίου) and god-like rule (τῆς ζαθέης ἀρχῆς) when the city erected a statue to him (late 4th or 5th c.).[47] None of these inscriptions bears a cross. They reflect the presence of men of virtue according to the older standards of the Hellenic cities among the public officials at Aphrodisias down to the Theodosian legislation of 392.

Cultic differentiation becomes much more distinctive on both honorific and funerary inscriptions at Aphrodisias from the second half of the fifth century onward, reflecting to some extent an increase of cultural tension, if not social conflict, between pagan and Christian. It will be recalled, for example, that two of Paralios' brothers, all of them scions of a wealthy pagan family of Aphrodisias, urged him to have nothing to do with his eldest brother Athanasius, who had become a Christian monk, when Paralios went to Alexandria to study rhetoric.[48] Zachariah of Mytilene's account of certain young Aphrodisians' participation in Illus' civil war c. 481–488 suggests social tension as well. On one occasion, when this group sollicited oracles about Illus' success with clandestine sacrifices and the rite failed to produce the requisite signs, the young men looked about accusingly and discovered a Christian companion who had supposedly ruined its efficacy by making the sign of the cross.[49]

Pride of place among the pagan decurions of Aphrodisias goes to Asklepiodotos, whose son-in-law, the rhetorician Asklepiodotos, had in the 480's visited the Isis temple at Menouthis not far from Alexandria, performed sexual intercourse with the statue of the goddess, and then incubated with his wife in order to conceive a child.[50] The younger Asklepiodotos had done this only after writing to his father-in-law in Aphrodisias to get permission for the ritual. Two inscriptions honoring the elder Asklepiodotos survive, one accompanying the erection of a statue, the other serving as a grave marker. Both were erected after his death, whose *terminus post quem* is c. 490. The statue base inscription reveals that a prominent Hellene could pursue a successful public career even in the years after the suppression of Illus' revolt. Asklepiodotos was one of many "who undertook many tasks in behalf of his fatherland and confirmed the public good" (οἳ περὶ πάτ̣ρ̣η[ς] πολλὰ πονησάμενοι ξυνὸν ἔθεντ᾽ ὄφελ̣[ος]). He also gained many benefits for his fatherland (πατρίδι, that is Aphrodisias), presumably in dealings with the governors of Caria. The statue was set up next to a vaulted chamber (θόλος) erected through his patronage.[51] The funerary inscription is more emphatic on points of belief:[52]

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[45] Roueché, no. 33.
[46] Roueché, no. 162.
[47] Roueché, no. 32.
[48] Supra, Ch. V, Sect. 1–3.
[49] Supra, Ch. V, Sect. 4.

> He did not die nor did he see Acheron's stream. No, Asklepiodotos is on Olympus among the starry constellations, he who built so many splendid things for his motherland.

In this sense, Asklepiodotos did not endure mortal death and descent into the underworld, but attained apotheosis, residing among the stars (all of which the Neoplatonists considered to be lesser deities)[53] near the Hellenic gods of Mt. Olympus. This assertion contains no obvious impiety toward the new Christian order, nor was it locally resented. The monument, a one-piece pyramidal stone, shows no signs of defacement other than normal wear. Asklepiodotos was popular with the Aphrodisians pagan and Christian alike, including the civil governor (*praeses Cariae*) and perhaps even the Christian metropolitan bishop. This probably explains why the synodal letter of Peter III Mongos, patriarch of Alexandria, detailing the elder Asklepiodotos' complicity in the rites at the Isis temple at Menouthis, was simply ignored.[54]

Pytheas, an exact contemporary of Asklepiodotos (late 5th c.) pursued a successful career in imperial politics, having attained the highest rank among senators as *vir illustris* and *magnificentissimus* ([ὁ μ]εγαλοπρ(επέστατο)ς [καὶ ἰλλ]ọύστριος). It is unclear whether he got these titles from a career in civil administration or from great landed wealth.[55] Pytheas erected many public buildings at Aphrodisias, including a colonnade (παστάδα).[56] Another fragmentary inscription from a statue honoring him reveals his frank adherence to the Hellenic faith:[57]

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[50] Supra, Ch. V, Sect. 2.

[51] Roueché, no. 53.

[52] Roueché, no. 54.

[53] Augustine of Hippo cites the belief of the Neo-platonists that the stars have rational souls and are divinities, completely blessed in these material forms. *De Civitate Dei* 4.11 and 10.29. A similar view is expressed briefly in Iamblichos, *De Mysteriis* 1.17 and 1.19 (Des Places, 68f. and 71–74).

[54] Supra, Ch. V, Sect. 4.

> City of the Paphian goddess and of Pytheas. She, having caused the city to prosper in a manner befitting a goddess. . . . For he, being unsparing of wealth, was the great builder of one work upon the other as a first-fruit offering.

The Hellenic name of the city, Aphrodisias, was still in use amongst all but fanatically Christian bishops and public officials, as was seen previously. It was quite another thing, however, to call it "city of the Paphian goddess" (ἄστ[υ] θεῆς Παφίης). This, with the clear references to the sacrificial offerings of first-fruits (ἀπαρχόμενος), puts Pytheas amongst the landed magnates of Caria, along with Asklepiodotos the elder, Paralios' family, and others. Pytheas was apparently something of a philosopher as well, for an epitaph found in the *Greek Anthology* refers to a Pytheas known for learning and good counsel (ὅσσ' ἔλαχές τ' ἔμαθές τε φύσει, μῆτιν πανάριστε).[58] A near contemporary of his, the Neoplatonist Proclus (ob. 485), was noted not only for philosophical erudition but also sound advice on Athenian civic business.[59] The Pytheas of the poem may well be one and the same as ours. Like him, too, the Pytheas of the poem was a Hellene, carried off to the Isle of the Blessed at death (τῷ ῥα καὶ ἐς μακάρων νῆσον ἔβης, Πυθέα).

Men and women of Hellenic belief survived in the decurion class of Aphrodisias until the time of emperor Justinian, whose laws of 529 and after deprived Hellenes of full citizen rights unless they accepted Christian baptism.[60] The inscriptions are nearly decisive on this point. The first of these, the funerary inscription of a young woman, belongs to the late fifth or early sixth century, but is unfortunately broken along its right edge:[61]

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[55] Roueché no. 55 and p. 94. The letter sigma is visible at the end of the second line of the inscription. Roueché, Plate XIII. Cf. the reference to his estates. Roueché, no. 95.

[56] Roueché, no. 58.

[57] Roueché, no. 56.

[58] *Greek Anthology* 7.690.

[59] Supra, Ch. IV, Sect. 3.

[60] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 6.

[61] Roueché, no. 154.

> The soul leaving the body . . .
> Released to the holy place of the blessed . . .
> In her eighteenth [year?] and fourth [month?] . . .
> All fleetingly mortal was Thea . . .
> Of common birth from Rome and Alexandria . . .
> Beautiful, gentle, beloved, discreet . . .
> A mainstay of prudence, a girl . . .
> Her soul dwelling with the immortals . . .
> Consuming . . . to bear a mortal . . .

Many of the terms are commonplace, but express Hellenic ideas hardly transferrable to Christianity. References to the soul leaving the body (ψυχὴ σῶμα λιποῦσα) abound in pagan and Christian funerary lore, deriving ultimately from the prevailing interreligious consensus about, and use of, Neoplatonic metaphysics and psychology.[62] The "holy place" or *hieron* of the blessed (μακάρων ἱερόν) is suggestive of an elysian sacred grove or temple precinct, where her soul dwells with those of the immortals (ψυχὴ ἀθαν(ά)τοισιν ὁμέστιος). One could refer to the "blessed" dead in Christian Aphrodisias, but not without affixing crosses to the inscription.[63] The familial ties of many prominent local Hellenes have already been noted. Decisive for the Hellenic faith of the young woman or *kourē* and that of her parents is the epithet "herm" or "mainstay of prudence" (ἕρμα σαοφροσύνης κούρην), all this highly suggestive of the religious statuary found in Athens and Aphrodisias depicting quasi-divine young women in the likeness of Kore or Persephone, daughter of Demeter. The Hellenic religious and funerary significance of these terms is unmistakable and does not lend itself to easy Christianization. It also suggests the hypostatization of the idea and virtue of prudence in the human form of the young woman, a seemingly Neoplatonic lapse. To clinch the argument, an epigram honoring the pagan philosopher Plutarch calls him, too, a herm of prudence.[64]

A second inscription indicates the continued existence of a fully Hellenic piety amongst the Aphrodisian decurions during the times of emperor Justinian the Great (527–565). It commemorates the death of a young woman named Euphemia in frankly polytheistic terms:[65]

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[62] Supra, Ch. IV, Sect. 1.

[63] Roueché, no. 164. A cross begins each of the two lines where the deceased is given the epithet of "blessed" (μακάριος and μακαρία, lines 1 and 3). A cross also precedes the name of Philosophia, daughter of one of the deceased, later called *makaria* in lines 6 and 14. As this term is often used for the pagan dead in Aphrodisias, I suggest that the crosses were inscribed to emphasize the Christian faith of the family in question here.

[64] Roueché, no. 201.

> In the reign of Justinian, in the seventh year of the indiction, on the first of the month. . . . Here the earth hides the holy head of a girl who had an appropriate name. She was of well-famed skill and similarly of seemly repute, being always (engaged) in prudent tasks. But, Euphemia, may you (now) go to the chorus of blessed gods. Euphemia completed her life at the age of eighteen. . . .

The indiction year puts the inscription in either 528, 543, or 558. Here the "blessed ones" are neither martyrs nor heroes, but the gods (ἀλλὰ θεῶν μακάρων Εὐφημία ἐς χόρον ἥκοις). The Neoplatonist idea of the ascent of the soul is lacking. The "here lies" concept (ἐνθάδε . . . γαῖα καλύπτει) derives from the legendary epitaph of Homer[66] and not from the Christian ethos.

The strength of Hellenic belief at Aphrodisias declined steadily through the second half of the fifth century. Although the Christian church had had a bishop since at least the early fourth century,[67] Christian decurions turn up on the inscriptions only from the late fifth century onward. One possible exception to this rule exists. It is the funerary inscription of Victorinus, a retired *protector* and former *praefectus vehiculorum*. The inscription derives from the period of the Tetrarchy (c. 300) and begins with the quasi-Christian "here lies" (ἐνθάδε κεῖτε), although no cross or other sign of cult is visible.[68] We know from elsewhere that retired Christian civil servants and soldiers are at times the first attested believers in the small small towns and villages of fourth-century Arabia and Syria.[69] It is not inconceivable in this case either, as there were many Christians in the palatine formations in the reign of Diocletian (284–305).[70] Whatever the case in this instance, the decurion class of Aphrodisias as a social, economic, and cultural entity shows few signs of the new religion until c. 500. The Christian decurions were quite active in building operations. Philip son of Herodian—a good Hellenic name—helped roof the south portico of the agora "in gratitude to his fatherland" (εὐχαριστῶν τῇ οἰκίᾳ πατρίδι). His title of rank *admirandissimus* indicates the holding of some lesser civic office, perhaps that of defensor of the city.[71] He was careful to have crosses incised at the beginning and end of the inscription, which is cut on an architrave block.[72]

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[65] Roueché, no. 157.

[66] *Greek Anthology* 7.3. Cf. Roueché, no. 204.

[67] Infra, Ch. VI, Sect. 3.

[68] Roueché, no. 152.

[69] Infra, Ch. X, Sect. 3, and Ch. XI, Sect. 1.

[70] Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 54.

[71] Roueché, no. 66. Cf. the pagan *defensor civitatis* at Gaza. Supra, Ch. III, Sect. 2.

Christian decurion families thereafter enjoyed upward mobility in the public affairs and administration of Aphrodisias. The city council erected a statue c. 500 to a certain John, who had received the first seat in the council (πρωτόθρονον ἀνέρα βουλῆς) in return for donations of funds.[73] It was the same case with a certain Hermias, who donated an endowment of lands with the annual produce of 3000 *solidi* for the operation of the Hadrianic baths.[74] The city erected three statues in honor of a certain Rhodopaeus, who was active in public affairs during the Great Plague of 541/2, holding the offices of father of the city, supervisor of the grain supply (σιταρχία), and apparently defensor of the city ([ἀρωγὸ]ν τοῦ δημοῦ).[75] The three inscriptions reveal only a single cross.[76] It is difficult to reconstruct Rhodopaeus' inner religious sentiments in all this, but it would bring no surprise if he had originally come from the same circles as the still pagan families of the deceased girls Thea and Euphemia mentioned above. There was a probably sixth-century decurion named Theopompus, a city councillor (πολι[τευόμ(ενος)]) and possibly father of the city, whose fragmentary building inscription uses the phrase "with (the help of) God" (σ̣ὺ̣γ θ(ε)ῷ̣, an obviously Christian formula.[77]

All the Christian decurions mentioned in the inscriptions have distinctively Hellenic names except John. It is probable in light of this and of known demographic conditions that either they or their families accepted Christianity in the second half of the fifth century. Aphrodisias became a distinctively Christian city, then, only in the time of Justinian, in a manner corresponding to the pattern that developed in Athens. Even so, some Hellenes felt free to express their beliefs in the early Justinianic period. We might suppose with a degree of confidence that Euphemia's family, who prayed for her safe journey to the "chorus of the blessed gods," erected their inscription in the seventh year of the indiction that fell in 528/9, the year before Justinian's law suppressing private belief in Hellenic religion and requiring the baptism of all residents of the empire.[78] After that, public expressions of poytheistic belief, even apart from sacrifice, might have proved troublesome or even dangerous to Hellenes, who at times took their religion underground and became cryptopagans.[79]

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[72] Roueché, Plate XVII.

[73] Roueché, no. 73, with Christian cross.

[74] Roueché, no. 74, with Christian crosses. She rightly rejects E. Patlagean's supposition that Hermias was governor of Caria.

[75] Roueché, nos. 85–87.

[76] Roueché, no. 86.

[77] Roueché, no. 89. Equivalent expressions turn up frequently in the sections of the chronicle of Theophanes the Confessor dealing with the emperor Heraclius' campaigns against Sassanid Persia. This material probably goes back to his letters to Constantinople from the war zone. *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, 1 (Leipzig 1883), 319, line 22, etc.

Polemics and controversies inevitably accompanied the Christianization of Aphrodisias' city councillors. Evidence of this dialectical interaction turns up in the epigraphy. The central event in this process was the conversion of the temenos of Aphrodite into the so-called "temple-church," which occurred in the second half of the fifth century.[80] The last mention of the goddess' apparatus of cult turns up in a funerary inscription dating from the late third century A.D.:[81]

> The sarcophagus and underlying plot are those of Aurelia Dionysia, daughter of Stephen. If any other person wishes to be buried in it, he shall give two ounces in gold above the usual penalty to the temple of Aphrodite.

The public sacrifices at the shrine (τῷ ἱερῷ τῆς [Ἀ]φροδεἰτης) once banned by Constantine the Great will have ended for all time with the publication of the comprehensive law of Theodosius the Great on 8 November 392, after the brief revival of sacrifice under Julian the Apostate and a reprieve during Valens' years as emperor of the Roman East (364–378). With the heavy concentration of Hellenes in the city council, it would not be surprising if this state of affairs continued for some time after 392, as happened at Gaza in First Palestine. As in Athens, the pagan Aphrodisians' civic pride balked at the idea of dismantling the temple of Aphrodite. This could not be effected until a sufficient number of Christians existed in the city council to overrule the money and influence of their pagan colleagues.[82] The epigraphy suggests the presence of many Christians among the decurions by c. 484–500, as was seen above. Similarly, the earliest Christian inscriptions on the temple-church belong to this time.

It seems probable, therefore, that the local archbishop supervised the demolition of the Aphroditeion in the wake of Illus' ill-fated revolt against emperor Zeno that had attracted many urban Hellenes but had begun to fail in 484, when the rebel fled with a few of his followers to the Isaurian fortress of Cherris in the autumn of 484.[83] The Christianization of the Aphroditeion provided the necessary public symbol of the "most Christian" emperor's victory over the retrograde forces of rebellion and Hellenism. Numerous conversions will have marked the public death of the "great god" Aphrodite's cult, as reflected in the veritable stampedes to the churches that ensued from the closure of the Marneion of Gaza in 402 and that of the Serapaeum of Alexandria in 391.[84] This tendency, stemming from the real or alleged impotence of the deity to protect her shrine from defilement by the cross and martyr-relics, will have caused a great many pagan decurions of Aphrodisias with their households to accept the new religion, along with the solid political advantages that accompanied adherence to it. The synchronism of the temple conversion with the emergence of many Christian decurions at Aphrodisias c. 500 is no coincidence. It is consistent with comparative data from other cities like Athens. Zachariah of Mytilene mentions clandestine oracular sacrifices outside the city walls of Aphrodisias in the 480's.[85] This datum provides another example of the continuance of sacrifice after the destruction of temples. Two pagan families, those of Thea and Euphemia, plus Paralios' local friends and relatives, including the elder Asklepiodotos, made up this group, a group not to be despised in numbers, money, or political influence.

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[78] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 6.
[79] On the legal and social issues of "cryptopaganism", see supra, Ch. I, Sect. 6.
[80] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 2.
[81] Roueché, no. 148.
[82] Trombley, "Boeotia in Late Antiquity," 222.

The Christian graffiti that invariably accompanied the public Christianization of towns turn up in Aphrodisias as well. Among these are: "One God, the only one, save Constantine!" (Εἷς Θεὸς ὁ μονὸς σῶζω Κωστα);[86] and elsewhere a cross accompanied by the quasi-Constantinian formula: "This (the cross) conquers!" (τοῦτο ν + ικᾷ).[87] The first known cross to appear on a public inscription in Aphrodisias accompanied the statue and inscription in honor of Aelia Flaccilla Augusta, the first wife of Theodosius the Great (between 379–386).[88] None was to turn up again, so far as we know, until another century had gone by.

The Christianization of Aphrodisias' local culture did not pass without protest. The Hellenic aristocrats' support of the Illus rebellion provides the most politically charged example of local resentment, but not the only one. For example, the incised cross on an honorific inscription to Vitianus, consular governor of Caria (c. 490–550?), was cut away from the stone, leaving a gaping hole.[89] One could understand this if Vitianus were the governor who implemented the Justinianic law of 529 against Hellenic belief, which entailed forcible baptisms and the confiscation of the estates of those who refused to comply. It is equally plausible that Vitianus administered Caria in the last years of Zeno, after the suppression of Illus. If so, Vitianus will have examined local Hellenes for their complicity in the revolt and have presided with the archbishop over the closure of the temple of Aphrodite. Another inscription (5th c.), badly mutilated, seemingly ascribes the eradication of "city-destroying civil strife" to the goddess (Ἀφροδ[ίτη]ν ἐνφύλιον δῆριν ὀλεσίπτολιν ἐξελάσαντα).[90] The inscription antedates the closure of the Aphroditeion in the late fifth century and the defeat of Illus in 488. It belongs to a time when the city council could still publicly acknowledge Aphrodite as the protecting goddess of the city. Such claims flew in the face of the official ideology of the Christian empire, which saw safety and public order as tied up with the ban on sacrifice and closure of the temples. After 488 it became difficult or even dangerous to oppose this concept of Christian providence in public decrees. Thereafter in Aphrodisias the Hellenes continued to acknowledge the gods in funerary epigrams, but it went no further. A century later Christian martyrs such as St. Demetrius at Thessalonike took over the task of officially preserving public order, as a remarkable section of the Acta of St. Demetrius reveals.[91]

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[83] Bury, LRE 1,398.
[84] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 3, and Ch. III, Sect. 4 and 5.
[85] Supra, Ch. V, Sect. 4.
[86] Roueché, no. 140.
[87] Roueché, no. 143.
[88] Roueché, no. 23.

To this must be added the activities of the *philoponoi*, the Christian zealots educated in the Greek *paideia* who practiced law, taught rhetoric, and entered other learned professions. They engaged in a vigorous polemic with the Hellenes on all the theological issues dividing pagan and Christian. Two wealthy young men of Aphrodisias, Paralios and Athanasius, accepted conversion under their influence in Alexandria, and returned home as monks in the 490's with the explicit aim of converting their brothers and other family members.[92] Their example, as the two men came from the decurion class, reinforced the politically motivated trend to conversion suggested by the inscriptions. A *philoponos* named Loukas was active in Aphrodisias at this time. His place inscription (τόπος Λουκᾶ φιλοπόνου) bears a cross and the Christian formula ("Mary bore Christ").[93] It is difficult to gauge his role in the Christianization of the city without information about his profession. Some notable men had place inscriptions in the agora (along with many working class folk).[94] Loukas the *philoponos* may have chosen deliberately to understate his learning and professional credentials for reasons of Christian piety. A Christian Hellenism of the kind purveyed by Zachariah of Mytilene may thus have taken hold at Aphrodisias in the 490's.[95]

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[89] Roueché, no. 65 and Plate XVI.

[90] Roueché, no. 64. From the position of the participle in the sentence, one can hardly attribute the supposed act to an agent other than the goddess Aphrodite herself. The grammatical problem is solved by editing out the final *tau* and *alpha*, whose addition was probably the stonecutter's error, thus: {τα}.

[91] In an allegory pertaining to the outbreaks of civil violence during the reign of Phokas (602–610), St. Demetrius is portrayed allying himself with "Mistress Good Public Order" (*kyria Eutaxia*), whose title of address had, of course, previously belonged to any number of Hellenic goddesses. *Miracula S. Demetrii* 1.10 (Lemerle, 112–116).

III. Christian Aphrodisias

The beginnings of Christianity in Aphrodisias have left no trace. The new religion certainly antedated the time of its first attested archbishop, a certain Ammonius, who attended the Council of Nicaea in 325.[96] He and the next three known bishops all had distinctively Hellenic names, the others being Eumenios (c. 381), Cyrus (c. 431), and Kritonianos (c. 451).[97] These men undoubtedly came from a small local Christian community, and some may have held decurion rank with the attendant advantages of education in Greek rhetoric. The bishops attested in the later inscriptions have Hellenic names as well, Theopropios (5th c. or later), Orthagoras (6th c.?), and Euphemios (early 6th c.),[98] with variants of the latter appearing in the nomenclature of at least one noble pagan family.[99] The church probably drew its archbishop—for Aphrodisias was the metropolis of Caria—from decurion families during the critical period c. 450–529, whence the city emerged in its final and fully Christianized state, apart of course from the existence of cryptopagans among the upper classes. The clergy attested in the inscriptions have common names, suggesting a degree of social statification in securing ecclesiastical promotion: Theodore Kodon ("the bell") the first lector (5th–6th c. or later), Stephen the subdeacon (n.d.),

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[92] Supra, Ch. V, Sect. 3.
[93] Roueché, no. 187.
[94] Roueché, no. 94.
[95] This question is discussed supra, Ch. V.
[96] Michel Lequien, *Oriens Christianus* 1 (Paris 1740), 889f.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Roueché, nos. 60, 90, 165, and 166.
[99] Roueché, no. 157.

Michael the subdeacon (n.d.), and Kyriakos (4th c. or later).[100]

It is axiomatic that the professional and working classes of the Greek cities accepted Christianity before their social and economic superiors, the city councillors and landed magnates. Conditions in Aphrodisias were not inconsistent with that prevailing cultural tendency. This conclusion derives from the stylistic dating of the local inscriptions.[101] Among the professional classes were Dionysius son of Photeinos (5th c.?), the barrister Jordanes son of Eulalios (5th/6th c.), and the barrister Flavius Photius (5th/6th c.), who rose to the rank of Father of the City and probably city councillor.[102] Jordanes, a common Christian name, would have become a Christian early in life, as he died young. He and Flavius Photius were products of the imperial law schools. Jordanes' epitaph pays tribute to a Hellenic religious idea ("envious, ill-omened Fate snatched him swiftly"), this an example of the barristers' proclivity for Attic affectation in composing epigrams.[103]

There seem to have been many Christians workers in various trades in Aphrodisias from the fourth century onward. Among them were Asterios the flute-player (5th/6th c. or later), Theodore the wax-massager (κηρομαπίτης) (4th c. or later), and various folk without any trade attested.[104] The latter perhaps earned their bread as day-laborers. This rule applies to a certain Asklepiodotos, whose pagan theophoric name is encased with crosses on his epitaph.[105] Asklepiodotos was born a pagan, his given name being inconsistent with the new religion ("gift of Asklepios"). Either his parents or he alone joined the Christian catechumenate later in life. As in fifth-century Athens, no one deemed it worth the trouble to assume a Christian name.

So too, persons with intensely Hellenic names are attested as late as 551, when a woman named Philosophia, daughter of Aristolaos and Theodoreta, died at the age of twenty-nine. Her parents were evidently still pagans at Philosophia's birth on 5 April 522, to judge from the name she received. The family evidently became Christian catechumens in the wake of the Justinianic law of 529. Philosophia married a certain John Philadelphus, a man of evident means who erected the family's funerary stele. He had the names of Aristolaos, Theodoreta, and Philosophia marked with crosses, evidently to show their unambiguous acceptance of the new religion. The inscription on the stele ends with the prayer: "May [God?] accept their souls and favor those souls with eternal life."[106] John Philadelphus' memorial owes considerably less to Neoplatonic cant than the analogously composed inscriptions found in Athens.

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[100] Roueché, nos. 114, 115, 120, 133, and 168.
[101] Roueché deserves great credit for this venture.
[102] Roueché, nos. 67, 69, 156.
[103] Infra, Ch. VII, n. 59.
[104] Roueché, nos. 113, 169, and 170–172.
[105] Roueché, no. 175.

IV. Conclusions

The great significance of the Aphrodisias inscriptions is the light they shed on the behavior of the Hellenists of the city in the later fifth and sixth centuries. While tentative, the dates assigned to the inscriptions by C. Roueché suggest a chronological pattern remarkably similar to that found in Athens for the closure of the temples and for the final eradication of public polytheism between c. 481–529. The late character of this phenomenon was not universal, but certainly prevailed as well in cities like Ḥarrān in Osrhoene and Baalbek-Heliopolis in Phoenicia Libanensis, where the epigraphic record is less revealing.[107] The self-expression of the Aphrodisian Hellenes' religious ideas in the epigraphy is excessive by the standards of the time. The self-confidence lying behind this derived partly from the strong local artistic tradition and partly from the great wealth of the decurion class thanks to the fertility of their estates in the Maeander valley.

It is rare for a local statuary to have such a consistently high quality of naturalistic expression as that of Aphrodisias.[108] It was protected under a provision of the Theodosian Code that guaranteed the safety of religious art objects so long as they had not been the object of sacrifice. Just as in Athens, the Christian population of Aphrodisias seems to have shared the patriotism of the local Hellenes for the monumental art of the city. This feeling certainly increased when the decurion class began to accept Christianity in the late fifth century. An important proviso to this was the maintenance of the other cultural traditions that did not impinge directly on the monotheism of the new religion. The only exception to this rule of patriotism was the assertiveness of the archbishops, who felt obliged to insist upon Stauropolis, "City of the Cross", as the official name of the see in their documents.

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[106] Roueché, no. 164.

[107] Jones, *Later Roman Empire* 939, 943. Rochow, "Zu einigen oppositionellen religösen Strömungen," 233–36. See now Tamara Green, *The City of the Moon God: Religious Traditions of Harran* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 1, Leiden 1992) (*non vidi*).

[108] For some examples, see supra, Ch. VI, n. 7.

As for the wealth of Caria, it should be borne in mind that the Maeander valley was even in the thirteenth century one of the richest agricultural zones of western Asia Minor.[109] Landed estates connoted political power in the Later Roman Empire regardless of the proprietor's religious beliefs. Whether Hellenes or Christians, the great magnates sat in the provincial council, as we have seen in the case of Second Syria.[110] Their close collaboration with the governor was particularly important for the timely collection of the *annona* and capitation tax. Neither he nor the emperor could be assured of this if the provincial aristocracy were alienated by religious persecution, as we learn from the example of Gaza where bishop Porphryius requested the emperor Arcadius to close the temples in 402.[111] Landed magnates who played the game well were undoubtedly punctual in tax payments and in consequence earned a degree of religious toleration. It is quite likely that the closure of the Aphroditeion c. 481–488 was more a symbolic gesture than a substantive reprisal for these reasons. More important is the implicit pardon that the emperor Zeno granted to Asklepiodotus and the rest of his coterie, who had sympathized with the rebel Illus and had performed illegal divinatory sacrifices in the presence of Christians who later turned informer. This, and Asklepiodotus' public works, are signs of wealth and political power that no pragmatic emperor could afford to ignore unless bent on overturning the existing political order.

The parting of the ways came only in the early years of Justinian the Great, whose "new politics" sought to liquidate the traditional elites and substitute a new infrastructure consisting of the episcopate and a parvenu imperial aristocracy made up of efficient men who had risen through the ranks of the clergy and civil service. The complete annihilation of the Hellenic faith was one feature of this policy, because polytheism had been a rallying point for the provincial elites in 481–488 and after. It would not have been expeditious to enshrine such a pretext in the active statutes (or, as I have argued, to have revived it) unless many Hellenes still occupied powerful positions of local influence.[112] At Aphrodisias, at least, there are unmistakable signs of an important historical break in religious allegiances around 529. The foregoing analysis provides the political explanation for it. It is more difficult to trace the extinction of the Hellenic religious feeling and belief that went underground in consequence of this, because the inscriptions fall silent and few texts shed any light on the question either.

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[109] Michael Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile: Government and Society under the Laskarids of Nicaea* (1204–1261) (Oxford 1975), 102ff.

[110] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 3.

[111] Supra, Ch. III, Sect. 2.

[112] The most pragmatic recent statement on this subject is found in Tony Honoré, *Tribonian* (London 1978), 14–16, etc. I am unable to discover any justification for qualifying the use of the term "pagan" or "Hellene" pace Rochow, "Zu einigen oppositionellen religösen Strömungen," 230.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ASIA MINOR

The Christianization of rural Asia Minor between 370–529 is an immensely complicated subject. Its beginnings are exceptionally difficult to trace. The new religion implanted itself at Ephesus on the Aegean coast and in the towns of the interior no later than the mission of Paul and Barnabus in the 50's A.D. Its progression to the cities up the Maeander and Hermus river valleys in the second and third centuries has provoked an immense literature and the subject need not detain us here.[1] It is believed that the city of Eumeneia on the Maeander was almost entirely Christian in 303 when Diocletian and Galerius began the Great Persecution, a rather odd exception to the pace of Christianization that prevailed elsewhere in this zone.[2] Substantial numbers of Christians lived in the cities of western Asia Minor from the mid-third century onward, as the epigraphy decisively proves. W.M. Calder sums up this process with precision and brevity:[3]

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[1] Very extensive bibliographies pertaining to the different regions of Asia Minor from the period of the Diocletianic reforms onward can now be found in the different volumes of the *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* series (hereinafter abbreviated as TIB): *Galatien und Lykaonien*, ed. K. Belke and M. Restle (TIB 4, Vienna 1984), *Kilikien und Isaurien*, ed. F. Hild and H. Hellenkemper (TIB 5/1–2, Vienna 1990), *Phrygien und Pisidien*, ed. K. Belke and N. Merisch (TIB 7, Vienna: 1990) and *Kappadokien*, ed. F. Hild and M. Restle (TIB 2, Vienna 1981). The literature on third-century Asia Minor and the problem of Christianization pertains mostly to Phrygia, and is therefore cited in Sections 2 and 3 infra.

[2] Relevant texts are cited in: H. Leclercq, "Euménie," DACL 5/1, 734–744. More recently, see: W.M. Calder, "The Eumenian Formula," *Anatolian Studies Presented to William Hepburn Buckler*, ed. W.M. Calder and J. Keil (Manchester 1939), 15–26. This volume cited hereinafter as *Anatolian Studies/Buckler*. See also Thomas Drew-Bear, *Nouvelles inscriptions de Phrygie* (Zutphen 1978), 53–114 for recently edited Hellenic and Christian inscriptions. A dated Christian inscription of a presbyter of 257/8 A.D. demonstrates that Christians lived public lives *vis à vis* their beliefs down to the eve of the Valerian persecution (no. 48). The ecclesiastical office of the owner of the burial plot is openly stated (*presbyteros*) and the Christian term for tomb *koimētērion* is freely used, thus corroborating Eusebius of Caesarea's statements about the strength of the new religion there. Eusebius, HE 8.11. Cf. W.M. Calder, "Philadelphia and Montanism," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 7 (1922–23). 317f.

[3] Calder, "Philadelphia and Montanism," 316.

> The social picture which the inscriptions provide . . . is one of orderly development, and of good feeling and accomodation between the Christians and their pagan neighbors. We find Christians holding municipal office, and then entering into relations with the Roman government and the Roman state religion which must have required careful adjustment between the claims of patriotism and those of conscience. At the end of the third century, this district suffered severely in the persecution initiated by Diocletian, whose policy aimed at the extirpation of Christianity, and who attacked the Church in its strongest positions. But throughout the third century—as the ecclesiastical historians have pointed out—persecution weighed but lightly on Phrygia: during those long periods when the government was friendly or indifferent, and the initiative of persecution, if taken at all, was taken by individuals, the Christians of Phrygia enjoyed a *pax ecclesiae* of their own.

By the time of the Council of Nicaea in 325, most of the cities of Asia Minor had bishops, and the urban Christian communities will have increased in size according to the normal pattern.[4]

It is difficult to identify the first movement of the new religion into the *territoria* of the cities, except at Christian *nekropoleis* just outside the enceintes and in some few references to Christian shrines in the literary sources.[5] It did not always begin at an early time so far as the inscriptions permit us to judge, but few dated examples survive and so the point is moot. It is generally conceded that the Christian epigraphy of rural Phrygia begins around 350,[6] and this is a plausible inference to judge from analogous conditions in northern Syria.[7] The literary sources indicate that the local cultures of Asia Minor adapted slowly to the new religion. In consequence, there was a strong pre-Christian stratum of religious belief and behavior in the less accessible parts of Asia Minor that lasted straight on into the tenth century.[8] Any discussion of the complex pattern of cultural adaptation must begin in the late fourth and fifth centuries, when it becomes possible to speak seriously of a rural Christian epigraphy, and when literary sources of monastic provenance begin to appear.

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[4] Adolf Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, tr. J. Moffatt, 2 (London 1908), 182–229.

[5] Infra, Ch. VII, Sect. 2 and 3.

[6] Infra, Ch. VII, Sect. 2, n. 107.

[7] Infra, Ch. X, passim.

[8] Select aspects of this question are treated in Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 329–45.

I. Hypatius of Rufinianae and the Christianization of Rural Bithynia c. 443–446

The life of Hypatius, a monk of the Bithynian countryside, (ob. 446), confirms the verdict of the epigraphic evidence that the pagan cults flourished in rural Anatolia through the mid-fifth century. A certain Callinicus of Rufinianae authored the biography of Hypatius. The work has the characteristics of a local chronicle inasmuch as it frequently notes datable external political events and thereby provides a chronological reference frame for the seemingly timeless events occurring in the countryside of Bithynia.[9] The hagiographer was himself a convert to the new religion and the ex-*notarius* of a barrister who also accepted Christianity in the early fifth century.[10] Callinicus seems to have lacked the educational skills for formal Atticist composition, and wrote in the standard and simplistic ecclesiastical Greek of the period. Another motivation for the simplicity of style may have been Hypatius' own criticism of certain ex-barristers (ἀπὸ σχολαστικῶν . . . τινες) enrolled at the monastery who would "philosophize in ordinary conversation by using the art of their Hellenic education" (τῇ τέχνῃ τῆς παιδεύσεως αὐτῶν φιλοσοφῆσαι ἐν ὁμιλίᾳ). Hypatius, who shared the prevailing negative monastic view of education in the Greek poets and philosophers, adjured them instead to reply to their interlocutors "in correct speech according to the just thing rather than according to the rules of philosophy".[11] By this he meant the language of the New Testament books, Psalter and Septuagint generally as well as that of canon and civil law. The life of Hypatius is therefore rich and precise in the terminology of everyday life. Most of the specific pagan phenomena mentioned by Callinicus occurred toward the end of Hypatius' life (c. 443–446). We may safely infer that the monastery first had to resolve its financial problems and the disciplinary issues connected with the interference of bishop Eulalius of Chalcedon. Only afterwards was the countryside Christianized. Callinicus' biography stands in contrast to the *Historia Philotheos* of

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[9] Callinicus of Rufinianae, *De Vita S. Hypatii Liber*, ed. Seminarii Philologorum Bonnensis Sodales (Leipzig 1895). All citations are taken from this edition. Cf. Callinicos, *Vie d'Hypatios*, ed. tr. G.J.M. Bartelink (Paris 1971).

[10] This seems to be the implication of Callinicus' story about a certain barrister who asked Hypatius to have his biography composed ἤτησεν ἐγγραφῆναι τὸν βίον τοῦ ἀββᾶ). Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 35.16 (Bonn ed. 74). The unnamed barrister will have assigned the actual task to a familiar associate, who had already taken up residence at Rufinianae. This supposition is borne out by the author's literary style, which owes a great deal to the administrative language of the period.

[11] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 29.3 (Bonn ed. 63).

Theodoret of Cyrrhus, a collection of monastic stories, many of them gleaned from eyewitnesses, dealing in part with the Christianization of the Syrian countryside. The latter work is, by comparison, overlaid with a stiff Atticist rhetoric which often blurs or conceals the phenomena described, making the survey of paganism in the Syrian countryside more difficult.[12]

Hypatius was himself the son of a barrister of Phrygian origin who resided in Constantinople and partook of the brilliant life of the capital.[13] Hypatius might have followed his father to the bar and have received advancement himself, but instead, while still a youth, he abandoned the study of grammar to join a rural monastery in the Thracian hinterland of Constantinople. Its hegumen was Ionas, an ex-guard of Armenian origin from one of the Palatine regiments.[14] The district suffered grievously from Gothic or Hunnic raids at this time (ante 384), and Ionas, using his Constantinopolitan connexions, on one occasion organized a relief operation funded by some *illustres* or senators of the highest rank to feed the refugees from fortified villages who came to the monastery to beg for food.[15] Nor were all these villages Christianized. It is reported that Ionas used to lead his monks into the countryside, and cut down and burn sacred trees and other cult objects. They thereby "tamed Thrace and made [the rustics] Christians" (οὕτως ἡμέρωσε τὴν Θρᾴκην καὶ Χριστιανοὺς ἐποίησεν).[16] Hypatius was later to adopt these tactics in Bithynia.

It was on 3 April 400 that Hypatius occupied the deserted monastery of Rufinianae. Its name derived from Rufinus, Praetorian Prefect of Oriens (391–395), who had founded a monastery on his estates in Bithynia which were confiscated after his execution (27 November 395).[17] The subsequent owner, whether the imperial *res privata* or another wealthy senator, neglected to support the monks. The place was abandoned when Hypatius and his disciples arrived, being supposedly haunted by a *daimon*. It consisted of the *apostoleion* or shrine of the apostles Peter and Paul, with their supposed relics, and some residential buildings. The monastery lacked an endowment and suffered from winter mud deposits.[18]

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[12] Cf. the case of Theodoret of Cyrrhus' rhetoric versus and simple and straightforward Syriac biographers of Symeon Stylities the Elder. Infra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 2 and 4.

[13] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 1 (Bonn ed. 7f.).

[14] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 3 (Bonn ed. 10f.).

[15] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 6–7 (Bonn ed. 16f.).

[16] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 30.2 (Bonn ed. 64).

[17] Bury, *LRE* 1, 87.

[18] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 8.7 (Bonn ed. 18).

Hypatius used his own resources, plus money earned at Chalcedon (some three miles away) from making and selling baskets, sacks, and garden goods. The monastery grew after a wealthy Christian matron began sending supplies to the monks.[19] By 406 thirty monks were residing at Rufinianae and the place was soon quite built up.[20] A certain Aetius, a relative of Urbicius, a *cubicularius* who rose to the rank of *praepositus sacri cubiculi*, provided artisans for building repairs, including a new chapel and cells for the monks, after Hypatius healed him from insanity.[21] Urbicius later provided the monastery with a *nekropolis* for the monks.[22] The monastery also had an aqueduct nearby which it used until a cistern was donated.[23] In time the number of monks grew to fifty.[24] These were often dispatched to staff the outlying rural *martyria* that wealthy donors occasionally built for the monastery (e.g., c. 430).[25] John Chrysostom's demand that the aristocracy of Constantinople build rural churches to aid the Christianization of their estates, which is discussed below, may have motivated these measures even in the years after his exile and death.

The life of Hypatius mentions the widespread and probably prevalent adherence to pre-Christian cults in early fifth-century Phrygia and mid-fifth-century Bithynia. One can hardly doubt that Anatolian deities like the Mother of the Gods still had a wide following in some localities, but the historical record is nearly silent. The exception to this rule is Artemis, the ubiquitous female fertility deity who was often invoked by women in childbirth. The festival called the Basket of Artemis was still celebrated in the uplands of Bithynia late in Hypatius' life (c. 443–446), and its adherents in the countryside seem not to have been Christians. Callinicus' report is extremely detailed.[26] Hypatius periodically made inspection visits to former monastic disciples who had located their abodes in "inner Bithynia" (εἰς τὴν ἔνδον χώραν τῶν Βιθυνῶν) near, and probably along, the course of the Rhebas river.[27] He once made such a trip at the time of the year—

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[19] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 8.14–17 (Bonn ed. 19f.).

[20] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 12.1 (Bonn ed. 24).

[21] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 12.8–13 (Bonn ed. 26f.).

[22] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 15.8–9 (Bonn ed. 29f.). Cf. *Cod. Theod.* 5.3.

[23] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 19 (Bonn ed. 32f.).

[24] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 18.2 (Bonn ed. 31f.).

[25] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 31.13 and 45.1 (Bonn ed. 66, 96f.). On the monastery, see also Raymond Janin, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins* (*Bithynie*, *Hellespont*, etc.) (Paris 1975), 36ff.

[26] Bartelink, in his discussion of *V. Hypatii* 45, attaches important bibliography. He refers to the deity as Artemis Bendis, Cf. Bonn ed. 96f.

[27] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 45.1.

Callinicus fails to specify the date—of "the defiled Basket of Artemis, which the countryside keeps annually" (ὁ κάλαθος τῆς μυσερᾶς Ἀρτεμίδος, ὅπερ κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν ἡ χώρα φυλάττουσα). The festival lasted fifty days, and people avoided the main road (μακρὰ ὁδός) at that time for fear of a hostile encounter with the goddess, whom other fifth-century sources characterize as "stranger-hating" (μισόξενος).[28] One of the locals (οἱ ἐντόπιοι) warned Hypatius: "The daimon will meet you on the road. Do not travel, for many are caught." One wonders to what extent wayfarers robbed and killed by brigands had this cause assigned for their deaths. Hypatius knew a purely local typology of Artemis' epiphany: "a woman as tall as ten men who went about spinning and grazing swine" (γυνὴ μακραία ὡς δέκα ἀνδρῶν τὸ υῆκος. νήπουσά τε περιπάτεικαὶ χοίρους ἔβοσκεν). As Callinicus has it, Hypatius actually witnessed her epiphany while on the road, and ridded himself of the horrible apparition by crossing himself (ἑαυτὸν ἐσφράγισεν) and standing his ground. Then, as the story goes, Artemis became invisible (ἀφανής) and the pigs fled with a great whistling sound (μεγάλῳ ῥοίζῳ). Hypatius and his disciples no doubt suggested this remedy to Christian rustics who not only travelled during the festival—for fifty days was a long time to avoid the main roads—but at times passed groves thought to be sacred to Artemis with considerable fright, particularly at the hour of noon, when the goddess was said to hold court with a group of lesser *daimones* and destroy passers-by.[29] Christians will simply have regarded her as the *daimon* Artemis, but the survival of the Basket of Artemis suggests that "inner Bithynia" still has a considerable unchristianized village population at this time.

There is an additional hint about the cult of Artemis in the parts around the monastery. Hypatius took pains to become a sort of country physician (ὡς ἰατρὸς ἦν παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ δοθεὶς τῇ χώρᾳ ταύτῃ),[30] with healing powers derived from the Christian God, with whom the prayers of the monk had efficacy when accompanied by making the sign of the cross with oil on the sick person.[31] On one occasion the parents of a young woman (κόρη) brought her to Hypatius because she could not conceive a child, but who later bore a son after the prayer of the monk.[32] The family seems to have been Christian, but it can hardly be doubted that there still exited primitive folk remedies and prayers to Artemis for the solution of fertility problems and the favorable outcome of pregnancies. It was Hypatius' task to displace such cult practices and reorganize them around the name of Christ (*Ritenchristianisierung*).[33]

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[28] Supra, Ch. V. Sect. 2, n. 61. Thanks to her daimonization, Artemis was anything but the "patronne des voyageurs" noted by Bartelink, *V. Hypatii* 271, n. 4.

[29] Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 334f.

[30] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 44.37 (Bonn ed. 96).

[31] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 22.21 (Bonn ed. 38f.).

[32] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 28.31–37 (Bonn ed. 59f.).

Artemis' power was at times thought to inhere in sacred trees.[34] Hypatius and his monks destroyed many shrines of this general sort, but Callinicus fails to identify the deities worshipped there:[35]

> [Hypatius] had zeal for God and converted many places in Bithynia from the error of idol-worship. If he heard there was a tree or some other such [cult object] which certain persons worshipped, he went there at once, taking along his disciples the monks, cut it down, and burned it. Thus the [rustics] later became Christian in part.

The people became Christian in part (κατὰ μέρος). The destruction of the shrines thus marked only the beginning of Christianization by the admission of Hypatius' disciple Callinicus himself. The new religion penetrated the structure of the traditional propitiatory rites only slowly.

The cult of Zeus Brontōn is known from inscriptions at pre-fourth century sites in the Galatian and Phrygian borderlands.[36] The pre-Christian agriculturalists of many localities must have invoked the provident Zeus who shifted rain-clouds with their concomitant thunder and lightning to places of need. Although Callinicus fails to mention Zeus Brontōn by name, a belief in his powers seems to have persisted in the countryside and is implicit in one of the hagiographer's anecdotes. Six men brought to the monastery a certain Agathangelos "who had been paralysed by thunder, a *daimon* having come down and attacked him" (ὃς παρελύθη ἀπὸ βροντῆς, δαίμονος κατελθόντος αὐτῷ).[37] The incident appears to reflect a recategorization of the cult of sky gods, notably the variants of Zeus, whereby the pagan deity was reduced to the status of a destructive *daimon*—a figment of monastic propaganda during the earlier periods of Christianization.[38] This line of argument preyed upon the sense of insecurity that accompanied changing cults and giving up the propitiatory rites connected with the old ethos. The bodily limpness which Agathangelos experienced resulted, of course, from the electric shock of the thunderbolt which landed near him. Callinicus reports that Hypatius cured the man by applying holy oil, making the sign of the cross, and wrapping him in bandages.

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[33] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 4. Cf. Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 339–45.

[34] Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 334.

[35] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 30.1 (Bonn ed. 64).

[36] *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua V: Monuments from Dorylaeum to Nacolea*, ed. C.W. Cox and A. Cameron (Manchester 1937), xxxviii–xliv. Cf. infra, Ch. VII, Sect. 2.

[37] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 22.10–14. Hypatius used blessed oil to anoint the man after making the sign of the cross over him.

[38] On hostile kratophanies imposed by gods recategorized into *daimones*, see

The pagan animal sacrifice, which imperial legislation had sought to control since the time of Constantine the Great (324–337 in the East), still persisted in the countryside of Bithynia. It should be remembered that sacrifices were thought to be a solid, general purpose method not only of appeasing the great deities at the time of public festivals, but also the lesser beings called *daimones* who reputedly assisted diviners and thaumaturgists in their arts.[39] Both types of sacrifice survived in Hypatius' day.

Hypatius' monks on one occasion brought him word about a building (οἶκος), perhaps an abandoned pagan temple, where forty men (ἄνδρες) were living and made sacrifices to idols (θύοντες τοῖς εἰδώλοις).[40] This communal arrangement, as Callinicus describes it, is difficult to understand and has no parallels. The men were not Christians. When one of them, a certain Elpidius, wished to convert to the new religion, he received a severe beating from the others. Hypatius thereupon retrieved him, treated his injuries, baptized him, and enrolled him as a monk in the monastery. Hypatius failed to take civil action against the pagan "cell", which possibly consisted of landless and unmarried derelicts. It would seem that the site in question lay outside the *territorium*, or rural administrative zone, of any nearby city, perhaps on the estate of a Hellene. Hypatius resorted instead to threats of divine destruction upon the place because of the sacrifices performed there. As Callinicus has it, some few of the men eventually died "because of a *daimon*" (ἀπὸ δαίμονος), which seems to imply death by disease. The rest then scattered. If the men were transients, this outcome was inevitable. The monks then desmantled the abandoned building (οἶκος) and left it uninhabitable. The fact that the monks, the "assault troops of Christianization", did not destroy the site earlier, as they often did with sacred groves and other sites of religious awe, suggests that Hypatius feared a veritable civil war in the country-

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supra, Ch. II, Sect. 2. Being struck by lightning was not an uncommon phenomenon in Late Antiquity.

[39] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 1, 2, and 4.

[40] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 43.16–23 (Bonn ed. 91f.).

side. Although some of Hypatius' monks had artisan skills, a good many were ex-barristers and therefore quite sedentary.[41] Nor, apparently, would the local rural population have stood behind them in such a resolve. At any rate, the threat of physical violence against defectors from the old religion remained a potent factor inhibiting the Christianization of the countryside.

Divinatory sacrifices seem also the have been common in mid-fifth century Bithynia (c. 443–446). Callinicus provides the detailed report about a man who engaged in mantic activity (μαντεύεται) whom Hypatius confronted and lured to the monastery.[42] Their conversation, which goes back to a formal statement delivered by the diviner which Hypatius ordered transcribed (ταύτας δὲ τὰς φώνας ἐποίησεν γράφεσθαι),[43] is self-explanatory:

> *Hypatius*: I have heard it about you that you predict the future, and if someone loses something you tell him who took them (sic). Tell me, please, how you do it, that upon learning how I might worthily honor you.
>
> *The man replied with alacrity*: If someone speaks to me about some matter, it is revealed to me at once during the night, and I tell them each to go and sacrifice a cow, sheep, or bird at the idol-temple, and furthermore, if an angel reveals something to me, I tell.

Hypatius, or more likely his monks, then honored the man by seizing him and locking him in a cell at the monastery, lest "Satan teach men through you to worship idols" (εἰδωλολατρεῖν).[44] At this juncture a group of presbyters came in from the countryside, evidently from a Christian village, and asked Hypatius to release the man, which was done after Hypatius had extracted an oath from in writing (ἔγγραφος ἐξωμοσία) never to practice divination again. The diviner, an old man (γέρων), died shortly thereafter.

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[41] Among those enrolled at the monastery were a stonecutter (*V. Hypatii*, Bonn ed. 94f.), a calligrapher, a mender and cleaner of clothes, an ex-gatekeeper, a mill animal driver, an *oikonomos*, a sick-nurse, and a guest-supervisor (p. 85); a military or ex-military *scriniarius*, who became the guest-handler of the monastery (p. 81f.); three ex-barristers (p. 72f.); the brother of an imperial count (*komēs*) who later became *magister militum* (p. 38); the slave of the Monaxios who was Prefect of Constantinople in 408–409, Praetorian Prefect in 412 and again in 416–20, and *consul ordinarius* in 419 (p. 34f.); an official of unstated office and rank named Akylas (p. 76f.); and the author himself, who seems to have been the *notarius* of a barrister in Constantinople (supra, Ch. VII, n. 10).

[42] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 43.9–15 (Bonn ed. 90f.).

[43] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 43.12.

[44] Private prisons and acts of imprisonment were illegal under civil law at this time: "If anyone hereafter should dispatch an accused person to a private prison, he shall be held guilty of high treason." *Cod. Theod.* 9.11.1. The *interpretatio* adds that no explanation is needed. Translation quoted from Pharr, *Theodosian Code* 235.

The incident illustrates the techniques of the mantics, who invoked *daimones* or, in this case, "angels" (ἄγγελοι). The worship of angels as a separate class of deities is well attested in the inscriptions of Caria and Phrygia from earlier centuries,[45] but one can hardly posit the survival of such a cult in this instance. The "angel" used by the diviner here was more probably conceived as a local tutelary *daimon* thought to serve diviners. The evident literacy of the man raises the possibility that magical papyri and divination books circulated in rural fifth-century Bithynia, as they did a century later in Galatia.[46] As Hypatius released him to the presbyters of some neighboring village, the man may have been a lapsed or recently converted Christian who had found his old trade too lucrative to give up. Finally, the monastic catechists clearly subscribed to a broad definition of idol-worship, which to them meant not only traditional Hellenic cult, but also the different varieties of divination.

The city and countryside had a symbiotic relationship in the interactions which preceded Christianization.[47] Urban and rural culture met in the diverse transactions connected by the exchange of specie for goods. Locally produced foodstuffs made up the bulk of the city's subsistence, and a regular traffic in raw materials entered the city as well, including locally cut stone and timber for the construction of buildings. A stock in trade of religious ideas accompanied these social and economic interactions, particularly when rural monks crossed this cultural frontier, at times in the interest of purifying an urban culture perceived to be tainted with Hellenic idol-worship, at times as the guest-handlers of secular men (κοσμικοί) who had became refugees in the countryside through disease, fear of sorcery, the failure of Hellenic healing techniques both medical and magical, and disillusionment with the politics of their professions.

Hypatius found occasion to intervene in the affairs of Chalcedon in the years after 431 in connection with Hellenic sacrifices.[48] The decision of the Praefectus Urbi (ὕπαρχος) Leontius to reinstitute the Olympia (τὰ Ὀλύμπια) at the theatre of Chalcedon provided the occasion.[49] The program of this local festival, which Constantine the Great had banned, is unknown, but presumably entailed athletic, literary, and musical competitions, all of them linked to the ethos of Hellenic *Hochkultur* and belief.[50] The invocation of the Olympian gods, burning of incense, and consumption of slaughtered animals—all this within the limits suggested by Libanius (c. 384), which were hardly strict—were necessary adjuncts to the ceremonial, even if conducted privately. Hypatius in response to this collected a band of twenty monks and marched on Chalcedon with the avowed intention of breaking up the ceremonies. The monastery lay under the superior jurisdiction of Eulalius, archbishop of Chalcedon. It was to him that the monks went first to complain. Callinicus gives the purported details of their conversation:[51]

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[45] A.R. Sheppard, "Pagan Cults of Angels in Roman Asia Minor," *Talanta* 12/13 (1980–81), 77–100, with map. Iamblichos of Chalkis (ob. 325–30), the Neoplatonist theologian, divided the celestial-spiritual world into orders (*taxeis*) of beings in which archangels and angels occupied a prominent place, being beneath the gods in excellence, but above *daimones*, archons, heroes, and the souls that inhabit human bodies. *De Mysteriis* 2.3 (Des Places 79ff.). Cf. Franz Cumont, "Les Anges du paganisme," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 72 (1915), 169ff.

[46] Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 340.

[47] G.E. de Ste Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (London 1981), 13–18.

[48] The incident occurred shortly after the Council of Ephesus in 431, according to Callinicus' chronology. *V. Hypatii* 33 (Bonn ed. 69f.). Cf. the chronology of St. Hypatius' life in the Bonn edition, p. xx.

> *Hypatius*: I have heard and know that idol-worship will be performed in the Olympia near ourselves and the holy church of God, and I have decided to go to the theatre and die rather than allow this to happen.
>
> *Eulalius*: Do you simply wish to die if no one compels us to sacrifice? You are a monk: sit down and let it rest. This is my affair.
>
> *Hypatius*: Since it is your affair and of no concern to you, I, seeing the Master dishonored by those who undertake these acts and the Christian people wandering in ignorance and practicing idol-worship, am come to attest to your holiness that, at dawn when the prefect is sitting in audience, I intend to come with a force of monks and drag off the prefect, and thus rather die than allow this to happen so long as I live.

Callinicus admittedly reflects the typical monastic bias against the secular ecclesiastical structure, but his accusation of idol-worship makes sense if one subscribes to a broad definition of Hellenism, that is the traditional public ceremonial accompanied or followed by numerous *private* sacrifices.

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[49] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 33.1. This Leontius was an historical personality, having in fact served as Prefectus Urbi at Constantinople in 434–35. *Cod. Theod.* 14.16.3, 6.28.8, and 16.5.66. So much, then, for the critics who regard hagiographic literature as nothing but "fairy tales".

[50] There is a good deal of source material that explicitly refers to the continuation of the Olympia during the period under consideration in this work. John Malalas mentions the celebration of the Olympia at Daphne c. 500. *Chronographia*, 395ff. The *alytarchos* of the Olympia at Ephesus is mentioned in a 4th c. inscription. *Inscr. Eph.*, 447. Cf. Glanville Downey, "The Olympic Games of Antioch in the Fourth Century," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 70 (1939), 428 and Alexander S. von Stauffenberg, *Die römische Kaisergeschichte bei Malalas* (Stuttgart 1931), 412–43. For Bithynia, p. 427. For the latest statement on the subject, cf. Glanville Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest* (Princeton 1961), 439ff., 455ff., 482f. The Olympia were discontinued after 520 A.D. (p. 518).

[51] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 33.5–8.

After being dismissed with scorn by the archbishop, Hypatius called together the local archimandrites with the summons: "Fight with me . . ." (συναγωνίσασθε μοι).[52] The threat of *stasis* worked. The prefect feigned sickness and remained across the Bosporus at Constantinople. The business came to an end when archbishop Eulalius saluted Hypatius as father (ὡς πατέρα). The incident is instructive on a number of counts. The bishops of the larger cities often lived in accommodation with the prevailing cults, and looked upon their own duties as primarily administrative tasks. The civil sphere existed separately and could go its own way, as at Chalcedon when an imperial official of the highest rank wanted to celebrate the Olympia. The monks, on the other hand, particularly those men of conviction who went about demolishing rural shrines, found themselves in conflict with both civil and ecclesiastical authority. The monks were at times not even conversant with the particular cult practices of festivals. In this instance, Hypatius had a certain Eusebius explain to him the matter of the Olympia (τὸ πρᾶγμα τὸ τῶν Ὀλυμπίων), as he knew about it only from hearsay (ἐξ ἀκοῆς). Eusebius presented the monk with a written account (καὶ ἐκτίθεται αὐτῷ ἐν χάρτῃ διήγησιν)—one of the many texts reported by Callinicus to be in circulation at the monastery. Little of Eusebius' little treatise went into the life of Hypatius, which sums it up tersely:[53]

> Eusebius said that the Olympia, an outrageous festival of Satan, was full of idol-mania, and at the same time slippery and destructive to Christians.

Callinicus was evidently fearful of recapitulating "pagan error" in his own work, and thus avoided detail. This monastic squeamishness about the phenomena of pagan cults, rather than any lack of basis for their remarks, explains the tendency of hagiographic writers to deal in generalities.

The monastery of Hypatius had another relationship with the cities: pagans, many of them Hellenes with lucrative government positions, at times went to Hypatius from Constantinople and other cities to receive baptism. These men preferred to receive it from his hands rather than from the bishops and their subordinates, who betrayed all too great a concern—as we have suggested above—for the administrative side of the ecclesiastical profession rather than *askesis* and pious acts of public relief. The latter made a deep impression on potential converts. As late as c.450, when the life of Hypatius was written, Callinicus found it necessary to distinguish Christian from pagan visitors to the monastery, so great was the cultic mixture of the crowds. Thus, one hears of a "wealthy and very Christian woman" (πάνυ Χριστιανή), who was a deaconess and ascetic, and who prayed at the martyrion of the apostles Peter and Paul and sent food supplies for the sustenance of the monks.[54] Another visitor was a barrister who was "quite a Christian" (καὶ ὢν πάνυ χριστιανός).[55] The latter had three brothers, all of them wealthy barristers, two of whom had not yet received baptism. They accepted the sacrament after Hypatius' convincing admonition.[56] One of the men later returned to his wife to convert her (σῶσαι), and thereafter lived with her in chastity.[57] He later received ordination as a presbyter and commissioned that a biography of Hypatius be written,[58] this probably a reference to the author Callinicus' work. If so, Callinicus will have emerged from a circle of barristers, many of them initially Hellenes preoccupied with worldly affairs, including composing epigrams of the sort found in the *Greek Anthology*.[59] The stylistic characteristics of the life of Hypatius suggest that Callinicus was one of the man's notaries. Coming from this milieu, the author—if this identification holds firm—had a definite interest in the disciples of Hypatius who came from the urban Hellenic cultural world. The fact that Callinicus omits names suggests that he resided in this circle and left them out in consideration of his friends as contemporary ascetic colleagues.

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[52] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 33.10.
[53] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 33.16.

Many other urban Hellenes received baptism at Hypatius' hands.[60] Among them was a ranking military *scriniarius* of middle age named Egersios (ἀλλός τις στρατευόμενος σκρινιάριος τῶν ἐπάρχων ὀνόματι Ἐγέρσιος, μέσην ἡλικίαν ἔχων Ἕλλην ὑπῆρχεν), who had misplaced some important documents (τὰ χαρτία), and, becoming fearful for his position, offered to believe in the Christian God if the papers could be found.[61] Hypatius agreed to arrange this with his God, ordered the man to become Christian (γενοῦ χριστιανός), and, hardly surprisingly, the men from the *scriniarius*' staff met him three milestones from the monastery to advise him that the documents had been recovered.[62] One can hardly doubt that Egersios, as a lifelong Hellene, had consulted a miscellany of pagan diviners before calling upon Hypatius to test the "magic" of the new religion, which visit providentially coincided with the discovery of the lost documents. He had perhaps heard of Hypatius through the administrative grapevine at Constantinople, which by this time contained some disciples of the hegumen. Pagan diviners like the one Hypatius imprisoned at the monastery boasted of such talents themselves. Hypatius, and Callinicus after him, stressed the capacity of the savior monks to do the same, but with the rite Christianized.

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[54] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 8.14 (Bonn ed. 19f.).

[55] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 35.1 (Bonn ed. 72).

[56] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 35.2–13.

[57] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 35.14–16.

[58] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 35.17.

[59] The *Greek Anthology* speaks well for the high level of Hellenic culture attained by members of the legal profession. Among the composers of pagan-sounding epigrams are: Agathias *scholastikos* (6th c.) (no. 5.200), Eratosthenes *scholastikos* (nos. 5.242 and 5.277), Irenaeus *referendarius* (no. 5.249), Cometas *chartularius* (no. 5.265), Julianus, Praefect of Egypt (no. 6.12), Isidore *scholastikos* of Bolbytine (no. 6.58), Eutolmios *scholastikos* and *illustris* (no. 7.611), Leontius *scholastikos* (nos. 7.573 and 9.624), etc.

[60] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 36.1–2 (Bonn ed. 74f.).

The advantages of adherence to the new religion, whether as a means of political advancement or because of popular impressions of its superior "magic", at times attracted proselytes whose disposition was far removed from simply Christian piety. Hypatius, or Callinicus on his behalf, claimed the ability to perceive which prospective converts to the new religion intended to stick to the old cults after baptism, including the magic arts. There were doubtless many such bogus conversions. On one occasion, as Callinicus' story goes, amidst a crowd from Chalcedon an Antiochene man approached Hypatius' retinue and asked for baptism, but the hegumen was repelled by a vile odor.[63] The story is worth repeating in full:[64]

> *Hypatius*: Whence are you, what is your business, and what are you wearing?
>
> *Antiochene*: I am from Antioch and wish to become a Christian.
>
> Upon examining him, Hypatius found on him a tattered garment, a sort of three-tailed belt and inspected it.
>
> *Hypatius*: What is this supposed to be? For it smelled of a satanic odor during the prayer.
>
> [The Antiochene] confessed that it was the garment of Artemis. At once Hypatius ordered him to burn it. But upon being cast into the

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[61] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 40.27–29 (Bonn ed. 81f.).

[62] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 40.30–36.

[63] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 43.1 (Bonn ed. 89).

[64] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 43.3–8 (Bonn ed. 89f.).

> fire the garment did not burn, but became as a spherically shaped vessel. Then Hypatius made prayer with the other brothers, and grinding with his feet, he made it thin in the manner of a coin, and mixing it with earth, cast it into a latrine.
>
> *Hypatius*: If you wish to become a Christian, bring me your book and all your magic devices.
>
> Hypatius sent a brother with him, and the man went and accomplished it.

The belt of Artemis (ώς ζώνης τριδακτυλιαίας) was presumably a magical or apotropaic device for which no parallels exist. It was only one device among the man's impliments of magic, including a book of spells. These Hypatius ordered him to bring to the monastery for destruction (φέρε μοι τὸ βιβλίον σου καὶ πάντα τὰ περίεργά σου), and sent along one of the monks to ensure the man's compliance. Catechetical strictures of this sort were designed to enforce a "sincere conversion" (γνησία μετάνοια)[65] that hedged out syncretism or cryptopaganism.

Fear of the magic arts prevailed in town and countryside. Men like the diviner incarcerated by Hypatius were thought, at times, to sell their skills to buyers. After making suitable incantations and sacrifices, the magician could, in theory, direct the power of an attendant *daimon*, often through an object, against the enemy of his client and cause illness or even death. It seems likely that persons received deliberate hints that sorcerers had been hired to direct *daimones* against them to create panic. This may explain some of the magic-induced cases of mental illness described by Callinicus. The view that *daimones* caused physical dysfunctions and psychoneurotic disorders was common in Christian thought, and not only in miracle-ridden hagiographies. The sober epistolographer Nilos of Ankyra, a near contemporary of Hypatius (ob. c. 430), expounds a theory of *daimon*-caused disease in great detail.[66] If magicians could control such spirits and impose them on others according to formula, the Christ-bearing monk could expel them by the rituals of the new religion. Hypatius often cared for the victims of such alleged practices. Let us consider some examples, most of them relating to city dwellers who came to the monastery of the apostles Peter and Paul for the prayer and seal of Christ administered by the holy man.

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[65] This expression, found in the quasi-Justinianic law of 529 (*Cod. Iust.* 1.10.11.5) goes back in fact to an edict issued by the emperor Zeno c. 481–88. Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 6.

[66] Nilos of Ankyra, *Epistola* 2.140, PG 79, 257D–264C. Iamblichos of Chalkis supposed on the Hellenic side that the malevolent *daimones* of the celestial orders caused disease as well: "The order of *daimones* weighs down the body and punishes it with sicknesses." (ἡ δὲ τῶν δαιμόνων βαρεῖ μὲν τὸ σῶμα καὶ νόσοις κολάζει). *De Mysteriis* 2.6 (Des Places 87).

Hypatius' reputed ability to counteract sorcerers' powers and the activity of *daimones* was, in the first instance, circulated among the wealthy class of imperial palatine and military officials at Constantinople, many of whom were Hypatius' disciples:[67]

> Among them was a certain *cubicularius* named Urbicius, without doubt a Christian, who learnt about Hypatius and was loved by him. He discovered a certain man who had been mistreated by his brother. Being wealthy, one had used magic against the other, and made him insane, and locked him in a certain place, and tried to kill him. Having learned this, the good Urbicius embraced him and led him to Hypatius and left him. Some of his children became suspicious and said to the *cubicularius*: "If he dies in the monastery, the monastery will have the legal right to take over his property." . . . The insane man was violently ill even in the body. His name was Aetius. [The man could not eat by himself, so that Hypatius had to feed him.]

It is difficult to avoid the supposition that Aetius went insane (φρενοβλαβής) because of hysteria about leaked information that someone was using magic against him (γοητεύσας). When Urbicius came to Hypatius to fetch Aetius in order to ensure his children's proper inheritance of the estate, Hypatius summed up his own position *vis-à-vis* magic and the secular business of legacies in general:[68]

> God has made me the man's bodyguard (σωματοφύλαξ) and I cannot give him to you . . . If you are afraid for the sake of his property, I'll make it over to you in writing not to take anything away.

Aetius eventually recovered. The relative importance of sacrifices as compared with incantations must have varied from magician to magician, but they were an integral part of these activities, as Callinicus confirms. When, on another occasion one of Urbicius' domestics named Alkimos was allegedly troubled and became half-withered, or, in other words, suffered a stroke (περιεργασθεὶς ἡμίξηρος ἐγένετο), the man went to Hypatius to be anointed with oil.[69] As he exorcised the illness-causing *daimon*, Hypatius accused it of previously dwelling in the smell of burnt sacrifices and filth (εἰς τὰς κνίσσας καὶ ῥυπαρίας ἀναστρεφάμενος).[70] The other cases of magic cited by Callinicus must be understood in light of this text.

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[67] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 12.4–7 (Bonn ed. 25f.).
[68] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 12.8–9.
[69] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 15.1–2 (Bonn ed. 28f.).
[70] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 15.4.

Hypatius is reputed to have cured people driven insane by *daimones* (φρενοβλαβήσαντες ἀπὸ δαιμόνων).[71] A certain Zoanes, an imperial count who later rose to the rank of *magister militum*, brought his brother Athelaas. The man was tormented by a "*daimon* activated by clever magic" (ἦν δὲ ὁ δαίμων ἀπὸ περιεργίας δεινῆς).[72] Refusing payment for his services, Hypatius healed the man through prayer, which is said to have brought to light those who had performed the magic (τοὺς τὰ περίεργα ποιήσαντας).[73] It is conceivable that, in lucid moments, Athelaas divulged the names of enemies who had had known associations with magicians, but the upshot is unknown, except that Athelaas rose to comital rank after his recovery. Fits of insanity might also grip the un-Christianized folk of the countryside. A rustic (χωρικός) named Zeno from a village (κώμη) some six milestones distant from the monastery was brought in, so troubled by a *daimon* that he did not know where he was and spewed abusive language upon everyone. Hypatius cured the man after four visits to the monastery. Callinicus hints that Zeno's village was not Christianized by ending the episode with the observation that Christ ransomed Adam by baptism, something which Zeno and his rustic fellows evidently lacked.[74] One thus risked the ill effects of the *daimones* without the protection of the Christian God.

To return to the practice of magic: Hypatius took the view that persons who resorted to pagan healers risked intensifying their maladies. Callinicus reports the rituals used by these folk. When a man came to Hypatius with a festering thigh and the monk's prayer failed, the man admitted previously having consulted "a woman who took a sword and uttered incantations over the wound" (γυνή τις μάχαιραν λαβοῦσα ἐπαοιδὰς ἔλεγεν ἐπὶ τὸ ἕλκος), who evidently performed surgery on its thereafter. The man was an urban Christian pursuing a secular career (κοσμικός).[75] Pagan healers with a reputation for guaranteed results offered sharp competition to the monks, even among the nominally Christian. It would seem that here the ritual prayers preceded some form of makeshift surgery, but without success, so the man went to Hypatius. The monk allegedly saw the woman in a dream surrounded by an entourage of *daimones*. This *mis en scène* perhaps owes something to the prevailing typologies of Artemis.[76]

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[71] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 22.14 (Bonn ed. 38).

[72] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 22.16. "Zōanēs" is apparently one and the same as the "Ioannes" who served as *comes sacrarum largitionum* c. 429–31. Cf. *Cod. Theod.* 16.8.29, 7.8.15. It would seem that this Zoanes "hellenized" his ethnic name. On the *daimones* of magic, see the summation of Porphyrius of Tyre's thinking (e.g. *De Abstinentia* 2.45) supra, Ch. II, Sect. 1.

[73] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 22.20.

[74] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 28.38–57 (Bonn ed. 60–63). Bartelink rejects the reading about Adam in *V. Hypatii* 28.57, as it is not found in *Cod. Vat. Graec. 1667*, including it in brackets in the text, because of its plausibility in this context.

[75] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 28.1–6 (Bonn ed. 56).

Callinicus presents yet another instance of magic ritual. He has it that an alleged sorcerer (περίεργος) arrived with a small boy at a little church (ἐκκλησίδιον) some three miles from the monastery on the pretext of being enrolled with the monks there, but actually to afflict them (θλίβων) and gratuitously at that. When the man later killed the small boy, Eustathius, the hegumen of the place, summoned Hypatius to witness the inquiry. Hypatius thereafter reportedly had a vision of four *daimones* with the bodies of camels, but the heads and necks of serpents. Then the angel which allegedly revealed this to him showed him the sorcerer in the garb of a slave sitting under a couch and twirling his hair (ἐκεινὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐν σχήματι δούλου ἠλιμμένου τὴν καπίλαν αὐτοῦ καθήμενον ὑπὸ κλίνην) and said: "This is the man who sent them." This was evidently some ritual—whose significance eludes us—connected with necromancy, for when Hypatius perceived it, he allegedly directed the *daimones* back to the magician with the injunction to do to him what had been intended for Hypatius. The result was a fit which caused the man to "gulp down his own tongue and hands unsparingly".[77] A later, Galatian tradition suggests that monastic catechists were reputedly able to dismiss such destructive spirits back to the men they served.[78] The entire incident has a problematical significance, because of the oblique development of the narrative. The visions probably represent an embellished version of the sorcerer's confession after he came to the monastery and received Hypatius' cure of his fits with holy oil and the seal of Christ (ἀλείψας αὐτὸν ἐλαίῳ καὶ τὴν σφραγῖδα τοῦ Χριστοῦ ποιήσας).[79] The killing of the boy had some relation to the man's necromancy, which might not otherwise have been discovered.

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[76] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 28.3. The text runs: "In the night I saw the woman sitting outside the gate a short distance away under a baldaschino in imperial guise and having an entourage of many *daimones* (καὶ δαιμόνων ἔχοντα παράστασιν).

[77] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 28.14–30 (Bonn ed. 58f.).

[78] Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 340 for the passage in the life of Theodore of Sykeon (ed. Festugiere) dealing with Theodotos Kourappos.

[79] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 28.27.

Many other alleged victims of sorcery came to the monastery. One of them was a much-befriended *illustris* named Antiochus, who believed that a rival (probably a competitor for honors at the imperial court) had subjected him out of envy to a *daimon* by magic (Ἀντίοχος, ἀγαπώμενος ὑπὸ τῶν ἰλλουστρίων περιεργαθεὶς ὑπό τινος διὰ φθόνον).[80] "So much did the *daimon* trouble him that all who saw him felt sympathy."[81] Antiochus was "of the other cult" (ἐξ ἑτέρας θρησκείας), and so probably a Nestorian Christian, since he became thereafter a disciple of Hypatius without the requirement of baptism, becoming "of the orthodox belief" and enrolling in the monastery.[82] Other suppliants were pagan, like a certain Makarios who received baptism at the monastery and became a monk. The man suffered from a certain "aberration of the wits" (παραλλαξία ἀσυμφανῶς εἰς τὰς φρένας) resulting from the fact that he had lived with sorcerers (καὶ ἦν συνοικῶν περιέργοις).[83] All this led him to practice extreme forms of *askesis* and to administer overbearing criticism to the monks. Makarios finally became delusional (ἐφρενοβλάβησεν) and shouted at Hypatius:[84]

> Rebel from Christ, the right hand of God is upon my head, and Jesus preaches through me, and makes revelations to me, and Jesus told me that I should grant you 1000 bishops as a gift, that you should rule them as archbishop.

We should not err in supposing that this utterance owes something to Makarios' cultic predelictions before his conversion: the mantic hand in Christianized form,[85] the personal revelations made by angels or *daimones*, and perhaps Makarios' self-perceived ability to put 1000 *daimones* at the service of a particularly favored client. Hypatius had Makarios put in shackles lest he wander aimlessly, but eventually released him. Makarios later came to grief because he was absent when Hypatius died.[86] Makarios' marked personal feeling suggests that the "magic" of the new religion which Hypatius kept in his own hands partially influenced his decision to convert to Christianity.

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[80] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 22.20 (Bonn ed. 93).

[81] Ibid. (Bonn ed. 93f.).

[82] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 44.23.

[83] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 42.1 (Bonn ed. 84ff.).

[84] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 42.18.

[85] There is considerable evidence for bronze hands as Hellenic religious objects. There is, first of all, a divine hand with the image of Zeus Heliopolitanus standing in the palm in oriental dress, from Niha on the west slope of Mt. Lebanon in the Beqa'a valley. *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie VI: Baalbek et Beqa'a*, ed. J.-P. Rey-Coquais (Paris 1967), no. 2930 (with photo). It was a votive offering. There is also a votive hand of Sabazios in Phrygian costume. *Age of Spirituality*, ed. K. Weitzmann (Princeton 1979), 184f. Hugo Gressmann, *Die orientalischen Religionen im hellenistisch-römischen Zeitalter* (Berlin-Leipzig 1930), 112–14. It is possible that Makarios' statement had such imagery in view.

In some instances the Christian monk took over the functions of the rural shaman, particularly in localities where the propitiatory rites of the older ethos proved impossible to eradicate. The Christian monk then became the rainmaker, the diviner for ground water, and generally master and mover of all geological and atmospheric phenomena.[87] Hypatius' shamanism is evident, but in muted form, for the pre-Christian elements have vanished from his practices. The most dreaded meteorological phenomena was the hailstorm.[88] Callinicus observes:[89]

> Another time he was crossing Mount Olympus with other brothers and it suddenly stood in the autumn season. For there was a turbulence in the air and a dark cloud overshadowed them on the mountain. They said: "Lord, pray that the hail would not attack us." Hypatius at once opened his hands on the spot and prayed to God in place. Although the cloud became most violent, the hail was light, and as they travelled the next two or three milestones, their sandals entirely avoided being drenched. When they reached the monastery, the brothers there were amazed that there was no water on their clothes.

The record on monastic shamanism is much more precise for sixth-century Galatia, particularly for this sort of incident, of which parallel cases abound.[90] In an ethos dominated by primitive animism and the sense of awe generated by the forces of nature, all of them spiritualized—even, indeed, dark forests in the mountains—the powers attributed to the monastic holy man inspired confidence, as an incident from Hypatius' early life suggests:[91]

> They came to Thrace but did not reach the monastery. They stayed upon the mountain upon which they were caught. In one area the mountain was thick with trees and the place was terrifying because of the *daimones* which dwelt there, who came out to threaten them and said to each other: "We are unable to do anything to them, for the

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[86] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 42.27–28.

[87] Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 338f., 340f., etc.

[88] Infra, Ch. VII, Sect. 6. To these examples must now be added a pre-Christian variant which turned up in Avignon, France. Invocation against hail: "Turn back every hail storm from the village and every snowstorm and as many things as harm the lands. God commands it O AMOUTHA, and you cooperate, O Abrasax." IG 14, 2481.

[89] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 46 (Bonn ed. 97).

[90] Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 340f.

[91] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 2.1–2 (Bonn ed. 9).

> child [Hypatius] who has authority against us is with them. [The travellers] were resting when they heard this and were terrified and remained awake until they heard the noise of the *daimones* fleeing through the trees.

Most of Hypatius' encounters with rural paganism came in the last decade of his life, c. 436–446. Even then the villages of inner Bithynia devoted themselves to the cult of Artemis, and a group of men could publicly practice idol-worship in a building not far from the monastery. It can hardly be doubted that Hypatius' practice of dispersing packets of monks in the countryside, and his destruction of sacred trees and other cult objects, were making steady inroads against the old cults. This occurred apparently in default of any serious efforts on the part of the local bishops or of the landed magnates who had accepted Christianity during the previous decades.

It is well known that the new urban aristocracy of Constantinople had extensive income-producing estates in the parts of Bithynia.[92] This group received a stinging rebuke from John Chrysostom, patriarch of Constantinople (398–404), during the early years of Hypatius' activity in the countryside.[93] A homily of Chrysostom criticizes the landed magnates' practice of building bathhouses (βαλανεῖα), honorary monuments (τιμήματα), halls (αὐλαί), market-places (ἀγοραί), and other miscellaneous structures (οἰκοδομήματα) on their estates in the villages and hamlets (κώμαι . . . χωρία), but of neglecting to construct churches. Chrysostom's demand that none of his congregation be seen having a village without a church (ὥστε μηδένα ὀφθῆναι ἔρημον ἐκκλησίας χωρίον ἔχοντα)[94] is directly related to the requirement of Christianizing the renters and smallholders in those places. He alludes to the prevalence of the old cults with the observation:[95]

> But, upon seeing your agricultural laborers full of thorn-plants (ἄκανθοι), you fail to cut them down . . . For is it not necessary that each believer should build a church and get a teacher to help oversee the task in behalf of all, that all may be Christian? Tell me how it is that a farmer (γεωργός) is a Christian, seeing that you do not take care of his salvation. . . . they have to walk myriad stadia and establish themselves in a foreign land in order to go to church.

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[92] Jones, *Later Roman Empire* 941.

[93] John Chrysostom, *Homiliae in Acta Apostolorum*, PG 60, 13–384. Some scholars view this sermon as a product of Chrysostom's earlier days in Antioch, but it was certainly circulated to the same end after he became patriarch of Constantinople.

[94] Chrysostom, *Hom. in Acta*, 147.

[95] From what Callinicus tells us about the slow Christianization of Rufinus' former estates in Bithynia, it is clear that the "thorn plants" represent paganism and not heresy. The Anatolian heresies do not seem to have penetrated Bithynia to any great extent.

The excuse was often advanced that there was often a church nearby, belonging to a neighbor, and that the expense was great. Chrysostom condemns this view: "Support a teacher, a deacon, and an ecclesiastical establishment" (ἱερατικὸν σύστημα): a teacher (διδάσκαλος) to catechize them, a village church to maintain the congregation. The patriarch adds:

> You are responsible for the catechumens there, who are in the hamlets (χωρία) nearby. For baths make farmers soft, and taverns wanton . . . markets and festivals [of the pagan gods] reckless, but [churches] the opposite.

The markets and festivals here mentioned (αἱ ἀγοραὶ καὶ αἱ πανηγύρεις) recall the ongoing celebration of the Basket of Artemis noted by Callinicus in the life of Hypatius. Chrysostom then points out the advantages of churches to civil order: the festivals will be more orderly, the village headmen will be more esteemed because of the local presbyter, farm production will be considerable (γεωργία πολλή), and all shall thus be free of evil.

The widespread survival of the old cults mixed with the new religion in Bithynia can hardly be doubted in light of the phenomena described in the life of Hypatius, nor can its synchronism with the sermon of Chrysostom be ignored. Nor can one doubt that Hypatius traversed the estates of the Constantinopolitan magnates many times. A wealthy person of his acquaintance occasionally built a martyr chapel in the vicinity of Hypatius' monastery (μαρτύριον οἰκοδομῆσαι εἰς τοὺς πέριξ τόπους)[96] in the manner of Chrysostem's advice about using economical methods:[97]

> Tell me, how great is the expense? Build a small house in the shape of a church. Let someone after you build a portico, and someone after him add something else, and thus the entire will be accounted to you [because you began the project].

The hitch came with providing salaries to clerics. Hypatius' monks staffed the martyr-chapels instead, after being ordained as clerics (κληρικοί). A manpower shortage certainly existed for Christianizing the countryside, and a greater financial investment would certainly have attracted more personnel. Monks had fewer needs and were thus cheaper. They also provided hard-line catechization.

The festivals and markets (ἀγοραὶ καὶ πανηγύρεις) mentioned by Chrysostom will have fallen into two categories: martyr-cults grafted onto the earlier seasonal celebrations for the pre-Christian deities, and other occasions like the Basket of Artemis which survived unmodified into the fifth century. Rowdyism and excess accompanied these festivals, but Chrysostom unfortunately fails to specify the names of the deities and/or martyrs honored on these occasions. A hamlet (χωρίον) would occasionally have its wine-press blessed, and a portion of its first-fruits given to the Christian God.[98] Chrysostom's terminology for this practice comes directly from that applicable to pagan propitiatory rites and reflects the mentality common to both the old and new religions (ληνὸς μικρόν, ἐξ ὅλων τῶν καρπῶν τῶν σῶν τὸν Θεὸν πρότερον ἀπόμοιραν καὶ ἀπαρχὰς λαμβάνειν). It can hardly be doubted that Dionysos, whose cult was still in evidence as late as the Quinisextum Council in the late seventh century, was invoked in the fifth century during the final phase of the wine cycle[99] and that wine-presses were sanctified to forstall this.[100] Rowdyism and excess certainly accompanied this cult. Of other festivals there is no mention except the Basket of Artemis—a significant datum. All this ties in with Callinicus' observation that "Christianity is not a chance thing" (οὐκ ἔστι τὸ τυχὸν Χριστιανισμός).[101]

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[96] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 31.13.(Bonn ed. 66f.).

[97] Chrysostom, *Hom. in Acta*, 147.

II. The Christianization of Phrygia c. 350–450

The twin provinces of Phrygia Pactiana and Phrygia Salutaris are generally thought to have had an exotic religious character in Late Antiquity. This supposition stems, in part, from the persistence of Montanism in these parts through the eighth century,[102] and in part from the peculiar geomorphic formations that left the landscape covered with pinnacle-like mountains and underground rivers, like the one celebrated in the *Miracle of the Archistrategos Michael* near Laodikea.[103] These latter became sites of religious awe during the pre-Hellenic epochs of Anatolian history and remained such through all subsequent periods of religious transition, the Hellenic, the Christian, and the Islamic.[104] The scholar is subjectively aware of the heightened sense of religious awe that accompanied the viewing of weird and brooding monuments like the facades of those at Midas City near Gordium.[105] Some scholars have seen certain kinds of religious enthusiasm in the behavior of sixth-century Christians of the Phrygian borderlands as a survival of older methods of associating with the mother goddess Kybele, wherein the person became "possessed" or "enthused" by her divine force.[106] Be this as it may, the epigraphy of Phrygia suggests nothing exotic. Rather, this region underwent Christianization along the conventional lines seen elsewhere.[107]

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[98] Ibid.

[99] Frank R. Trombley, "The Council in Trullo (691–692): The Canons Pertaining to Paganism, Heresy, and the Invasions," *Comitatus* 9 (1978), 5.

[100] On this, see infra, Ch. X, Sect. 1 and 6.

[101] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 48.1 (Bonn ed. 99). It is worth indicating that a recently discovered inscription points to the existence of estates in Bithynia. The dedicatory inscription of a man, who was probably an *oikonomos* or estate-manager, is "in behalf of my masters (ὑπὲρ τῶν δεσποτῶν μου) and myself and all my own (household)." *Die Inschriften von Kalchedon*, ed. R. Merkelbach *et alii* (Bonn 1980), no. 104.

[102] Theophanes, *Chronographia*, AM 6214 (De Boor 1, 401). The reality of there having been Montanists active in the 8th c. is disputed by A. Sharf, "The Jews, the Montanists, and the Emperor Leo III," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 59 (1966), 37–46. Cf. Calder, "Philadelphia and Montanism."

[103] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 4.

Signs of the ongoing Christianization of the Phrygian countryside turn up in the fifth-century life of the martyr St. Aberkios (2nd c.). A more precise statement lies in the life of Hypatius of Rufinianae. Hypatius was born in an unnamed city of Phrygia in 384. The countryside was barely Christianized at that time:[108]

> For at that time in Phrygia there was no [monk], unless one or two here and there, and if a church was to be found somewhere the clerics were lazy because of being too close to the land. Wherefrom the people are catechumens even until this day (post 446 A.D.). But upon hearing about him [Hypatius] and being amazed that such a

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[104] Cf. supra, Ch. II, Sect. 4.

[105] C.H. Haspels, *The Highlands of Phrygia: Sites and Monuments*, 2 v. (Princeton 1970), 73–77, 205–254, Pl. 1–7, 8, etc. Altars at Avdan-Teşvikiye, Pl. 281–287.

[106] Trombley, *The Survival of Paganism*, 42f.

[107] The subject of the Christianization of Phrygia has an immense bibliography. Scholars have, however, concentrated their efforts on the districts which showed signs of the new religion in the third century for the most part, a period well before the *general* Christianization of the Late Roman countryside, which is the object of the present study. On Phrygia from the time of the Pauline mission onward, see: W.M. Calder, "Early-Christian Epitaphs from Phrygia," *Anatolian Studies* 5 (1955), 25f. On the motifs which enable the scholar to identify and date early Christian inscriptions in Phrygia, see the introductory sections of *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua, edd. var.* 1, 5, 7 (Manchester 1928–56). The editors have not always been in full agreement with each other on these questions, although I have in general followed W.M. Calder's dating criteria. For the northern parts of Phrygia, see: J.G.C. Anderson, "Paganism and Christianity in the Upper Tembris Valley," *Studies in the History and Art of the Provinces of the Eastern Roman Empire*, ed. W.M. Ramsay (Aberdeen 1906), 183–227. This volume is hereinafter cited as *SERP*. Cf. A. Petrie, "Epitaphs in Phrygian Greek," *SERP*, 119–34. On the "resistance" to Christianization, see: William M. Ramsay, "The Tekmorian Guest-friends: An Anti-Christian Society on the Imperial Estates at Pisidian Antioch," *SERP*, 305–77. These and the various other studies contain vitally important information on the dating of inscriptions by letter forms and Christian symbols. The following discussion treats districts and villages that were Christianized between c. 350–500 A.D.

[108] Callinicus, *V. Hypatii* 1.4–5 (Bonn ed. 8).

> man came from their country, they all became Christians within as little time as was necessary (i.e. for the catechumenate), but some few emulated him in goodness.

Many rustics thus passed over the long provincial boundary shared with southern Bithynia to visit the monastery at Rufinianae, which lay not far from Chalcedon. The *termini* of these conversions in Phrygia are between 406 when Hypatius occupied the deserted monastery at Rufinianae until his death in 446. As most of these folk were still catechumens in the years after 446, it seems most probable that they had accepted Christianity as a consequence of Hypatius' measures against rural paganism, which mostly fell between 443–446. There is no reason to suppose that Hypatius did not cross into the northern parts of the Phrygias on occasion. The rural funerary inscriptions of Phrygia seldom give the dates of their erection. In consequence of some possible exaggeration in this text, I am inclined to put the conversion of the *parts of the Phrygian countryside discussed below* c. 375–450, with some villages nevertheless remaining pagan until the time of John of Ephesus' missionary activity between c. 538–566.[109] These dates do not diverge widely from those suggested by the epigraphists, who put the *first* Christian inscriptions in *these particular villages* c. 375–400 at the earliest.[110]

The late pagan and early Christian inscriptions of Phrygia are largely edited in the series *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua*. W.M. Calder, the editor of the first volume, advocates caution in attributing Christian religion to funerary texts that lack crosses and other signs of cult (my italics):[111]

> The first problem set by any group of third or early fourth-century tombstones on the Anatolian plateau is "Which are the pagan stones and which the Christian?" . . . Such an attempt, if it errs, ought in the present state of our knowledge to *err on the side of caution*; the *onus of proof* is *in every doubtful case on the Christian epigraphist.*

Calder then notes seven Christian inscriptions to demonstrate his point, but five of them come from the city of Laodikea, a typical sort of distribution that tells little about the countryside.[112] The cross did not become common usage on Phrygian inscriptions until after 350.[113] I would myself prefer a somewhat later date, c. 365, as the example of Syria suggests.[114] Calder adds, in reference to the pioneering studies of William Mitchell Ramsay:[115]

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[109] Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 329–32.

[110] This rule applies, strictly speaking, only to the districts covered in this section. Cf. supra, Ch. VII, n. 107.

[111] *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua I*, ed. W.M. Buckler (Manchester 1928), xviii (my italics). Hereinafter cited as *MAMA I*.

[112] MAMA 1, xviii–xix.

[113] MAMA 1, xx.

> We should further . . . expect the earliest Christian inscriptions to reproduce, with perhaps slight modifications, the local pagan formulae. . . . Later, Christian epigraphy will strike out on lines of its own.

This principle is proven definitively by analysing the epigraphy of the Limestone Massif east of Antioch in Syria.[116]

The first district in our survey is the so-called Axylon or Axylos, a treeless steppe lying generally north of Laodikea. The eastern part of this plain was generally called Proseilemmene.[117] The inscriptions here put the Christianization of the nearer *territorium* of Laodikea in the last quarter of the fourth century. The Axylon did not at first feel the impact of Nicaean Christianity. The initiative lay rather with the Novatian sect or some other heresy whose clergy, evidently excluded from the churches of Laodikea, seem to have sought abodes and conversions in the countryside. An inscription at present-day Düyer dated by W.M. Calder to the "later fourth century" mentions one Germanus, a presbyter of "the holy church of the Orthodox". It bears no crosses.[118] The shouting of "orthodox" (τῆς ἐκλησίας τῶν 'Ορτοδόξων) connotes some Anatolian heresy.

The agricultural trades and status of the rustics of the Axylon are seldom given in the inscriptions. One exception is found at the village of Aralleiōn (present-day Atlandy) where a family of tax farmers or contractors (μισθωταί) Boethos and his wife Klete, erected a memorial for their elder son Epikletos and niece Varelliane.[119] It belongs to the third century, or perhaps later, to judge from the mixture of square and round uncials (ϵ, ⊏, ω). These folk were not Christians. They should not be confused with tenant farmers or renters (μισθωτοί), a sadly oppressed class that eked out a living on the steppe, seeing its children die, and its agricultural surplus swallowed up by the landlords.[120] Christianity began to penetrate Aralleiōn probably no later than the first quarter of the fifth century, when an unnamed woman was buried. The inscription bears the Christian formula "here lies" (ἐνθάδε . . . κατάκειται), an indirect allusion to the impermanence of physical death. She was the "granddaughter of Paul and Aurelius, wife of Marcian, and bed-partner (σύγκοιτος) of Orestes."[121] The fashion for the name Aurelius began to die out in the late fourth century, as the prestige of the Antonine dynasty vanished and local habit changed.[122] The passing of two generations and the inscription's mixture of round and square uncials (Є, C, Ш) once again hint at a date c. 375. The family had roots at Aralleiōn. Otherwise it is difficult to explain the addition of the grandparents' names, who must have been well-known locally. The unnamed woman had apparently been married twice, once as the "bed partner" (σύγκοιτος) of Orestes (a Hellenic name), then as the "wife" (νύμφη) of Marcian. It is tempting to speculate that the change of nomenclature refers to a non-Christian marriage followed by a Christian one. This would have been eminently possible with the known life-expectancy for men around 25–30 years at the time when the countryside was being Christianized. The inscription is unfortunately broken at the end.

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[114] Infra, Ch. X, *prooem.* and Sect. 1–4.

[115] MAMA 1, xx–xxi.

[116] Infra, Ch. X, *prooem.* and Sect. 1–4.

[117] MAMA 1, xv.

[118] MAMA 1, 290. Another inscription of this type does bear a cross. MAMA 1, 291.

[119] MAMA 1, 292. Round uncials are quite common in Phrygia throughout the 3rd and 4th c., but square uncials, perhaps used simply to make the task of the stone-cutter easier, begin to turn up at the same time. A good example of 3rd c. work is found in Anderson, "Paganism and Christianity," nos. 22 and 23, another in Drew-Bear, *Inscriptions de Phrygie*, no. 48 (Eumeneia, 257/8 A.D.). Mixed round and square uncials are found in the funerary inscription of bishop Heortasios of Appia, which W.M. Calder prefers to date after 350 A.D. C.W.M. Cox, "Bishop Heortasius of Appia," *Anatolian Studies Presented to William Hepburn Buckler*, ed. W.M. Calder and Josef Keil (Manchester 1939), 65.

The village of Aralleiōn was Christian by the mid-fifth century, for we find one text ("Lord, help your servant Markos Nekephoros (sic)) with a large Maltese cross inscribed in a circle (5th c. or later).[123] The burial of a Christian soldier took place, it seems, sometime in the fifth century:[124]

> Sambatios, an *ordinarius* of the mighty *lanciarii*, shedding moaning tears upon this marker, built a tomb holding his beloved son Konon while on an expedition, who yielded up beauty and slippped into death in this alien country by the counsel of the greatest, all-preeminent God.

The quasi-monotheistic formula (μεγί[στ]ου (θ)εοῦ πανυπιρόχο[υ] (sic)), coupled with the son's name Konon, a common Christian name in Isauria and Cilicia, distinguish this as a Christian interment. The non-commissioned officer Sambatios evidently selected the Christian *nekropolis* of Aralleiōn as the most suitable burial site. This formation of *lanciarii*, a regiment of *comitatenses*, was evidently in transit. One last Christian inscription, that of Aurelius Meneas, belongs c. 375–400 because of its cross and the praenomen of its owner.[125]

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[120] Ste. Croix, *Class Struggle in the Greek World*, 158–62.

[121] MAMA 1, 301.

[122] See Calder's comment, MAMA 1, xxi. See also Anderson, "Paganism and Christianity," 198 (". . . more rarely in the fourth"). The latter adds that a specifically "Christian" epigraphic nomenclature did not begin to develop in the Upper Tembris valley until the later 3rd c. Ibid.

[123] MAMA 1, 305.

[124] MAMA 1, 306.

The fullest epigraphic sample in the Axylon comes from the ancient village of Kristenos (present-day Cheshmeli Zebir).[126] Kristenos was ethnically Phrygian through at least the later third century A.D. One inscription contains a passage in Phrygian.[127] The local rustics made offerings to Attis, the chthonic male deity seemingly worshipped in synoikism with the Christian archangel Michael at Colossae.[128] Theophoric personal names derived from that of the god like Attas prevailed in both the pagan and Christian nomenclature of the place.[129] There was at times intermarriage with neighboring villages. One Aurelius Eusebis (sic) from the village of Gdanmass moved to Kristenos and wedded a woman there named Tata, another pre-Christian Anatolian name.[130] The local economy was typical of the steppe environment. One funerary stele depicts oxen yoked to a plough, suggesting wheat and barley culture, and a pruning hook, suggesting the existence of olive trees.[131] A first-fruit offering to Attis suggests that the rustics profited from marketing wool: it portrays a table, a wool-basket, a spindle, and a distaff.[132] The Axylon seems thus to have combined pastoralism with cereals farming.

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[125] MAMA 1, 307. Additional Christian inscriptions suggests that Aralleiōn did not become fully Christian until sometime in the fifth century. *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua VII: Monuments from Eastern Phrygia*, ed. W.M. Calder (Manchester 1956), xli and nos. 589–592. Of these, no. 591 belongs in the late 4th c., but the rest clearly belong in the 5th. Of the latter, no. 589 has square uncials, a cross with three-pointed petals, and an owner named Auryllios (sic) Alexander, a rather late occurrence of the Antonine *praenomen*. No. 590 is marked by a Maltese/trefoil cross, round uncials, and the owner's name Aurelios Georgios son of Konon. The names of these martyrs do not seem to have been widely selected until the later 4th c. Aur. Georgios was quite clearly the son of a Christian (Konon), who accepted baptism in the later 4th c.

[126] MAMA 1, 339.

[127] MAMA 1, 340, 341. This problem is discussed supra, Ch. II, Sect. 4. On Attis in the Roman Imperial epoch: Thomas Drew-Bear and Christian Naour, "Divinités de Phrygia," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der antiken Welt* 2.18.3, ed. Wolfgang Haase (Berlin-New York 1990), 1907–2044.

[128] [τετικμεν]ος Αττιαδειτου. MAMA 1, 341.

[129] MAMA 1, 340 (pagan), 356, 368.

[130] MAMA 1, 339.

[131] MAMA 1, 340.

[132] MAMA 1, 341. Cf. no. 353.

The chronological distribution of inscriptions at Kristenos runs roughly from the late third to the fifth century, and possibly beyond. The praenomen Aurelius turns up in both the pagan and Christian epigraphy. The latter are identifiable only by crosses, which seem to be of late fourth-century date and after. Pagan altars have turned up at Kristenos. One of them, dedicated by Aurelius Vales (or Valens) to his children Aurelius Manes and Aurelia Tata, reflects the Phrygian belief that the dead became lesser subterranean deities (δεως ζεμελως = θεοὶ καταχθόνιοι).[133] The letter forms suggest a late third-century date for the offering (squared uncials). The earliest identifiable Christian inscription, the burial marker of Aurelius Aniketos, son of Eugenius, has a Maltese cross (late 4th c.?).[134] After this, Christian texts become quite common, even mentioning presbyters of the local church.[135] The fifth-century inscriptions bear some kind of Christian symbol, either an inscribed cross or else Alpha-Chi-Rho-Omega along with the key words "this marker" (τόδε σῆμα). One of them is a bit illiterate, having the redundant combination: "This marker here lies" (Α⳨ω τόδε σῆμα ἐνθάδε κατάκιτε).[136] The other states, more correctly:[137]

> (Cross inscribed in circle) Makedonios, son of the great (?) priest Diomedes, fastened this great marker to a tomb by way of remembrance for his prudent wife Nonniē. . . .

This "Homeric" priest (ἀρητήρ) was probably one of the village presbyters, his "prudent" wife (πινυτή) a new Penelope. The knowledge of Epic Greek suggested by this inscription reflects a modest rise in rural literacy with the coming of Christianity. A pagan altar carved for funerary banquets was Christianized sometime after 391 with the incision of an Ankh cross on it.[138] This symbol seems not to have come into Mediterranean-wide currency until the closure of the Serapeum in Alexandria, whereupon the ankh signified the death of the pagan great god Sarapis and the Christian "life to come".[139] How soon the ankh cross reached the isolated village of Kristenos as the sign of the victory of the new religion will remain a matter of conjecture. I would suggest a date no earlier than c. 410. The pagan Aurelius Menneas had erected the altar for his deceased son Aurelius Atta, who thereafter became a Phrygian divinity. The cross was added later, after the bereaved father had accepted the new religion. The funerary banquets will have continued after Aurelius Menneas' baptism, but he will have met his son for a repast in the hope that the latter now enjoyed concourse with Christian angels.[140]

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[133] MAMA 1, 343. Cf. W.M. Calder, "Corpus Inscriptionum Neo-Phrygiarum," *Journal of Roman Studies* 31 (1911), 207f.

[134] MAMA 1, 357.

[135] MAMA 1, 363, 369.

[136] MAMA 1, 371.

[137] MAMA 1, 370.

[138] MAMA 1, 368.

[139] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 3.

The other villages of the Axylon may be dealt with more briefly. In general their epigraphy reflects the observations made about Aralleiōn and Kristenos above. At present-day Goslu, we learn of a presbyter and two deaconesses on separate steles.[141] The Christian key words "this marker" recur.[142] The latest Christian inscription dates from 618.[143] The Christianization of present-day Kolu Kissa began before c. 400.[144]

At present-day Sengen there had been an annual priesthood of Zeus Megistos. An altar inscription records the sacrifice of an ox.[145] A Christian presbyter, deacon, and deaconess supplanted this cult probably around the same time as at the other sites.[146] The village contains a remarkable funerary inscription with a hexametric couplet. The inscription combines recollections of Homeric language with the grossest kinds of itacism and confusion between the genitive and dative cases. W.M. Calder observes: "The hexameter in 11. 10, 11 startles us in such company. This inscription, on a well-carved and pretentious monument, throws significant light on the state of education in a Christian villages about A.D. 375 to 450":[147]

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[140] Cf. the outlawry of funerary banquets required in the epigrams of Gregory of Nazianzus. Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 2. On the forbidden cult of angels, supra, Ch. II, Sect. 4. The Aurelius Menneas inscription is found in: MAMA 1, 368. The conclusions given here about Kristenos (present-day Cheshmeli Zebir) are generally consistent with the later batch of inscriptions published in MAMA 7, 562–570. Most of the latter are characterized by square uncials, ligatures, and rather late-looking crosses. None of the Christian inscriptions of this group belongs before the late 4th c.

[141] MAMA 1, 324–326.

[142] MAMA 1, 319.

[143] MAMA 1, 323. For a correction of the date given by Calder in MAMA 1, see: Henri Grégoire, "Inscriptions historiques byzantines," *Byzantion* 4 (1927–28), 460f.

[144] MAMA 1, 312.

[145] MAMA 1, 373.

[146] MAMA 1, 381, 383. Cf. also MAMA 7, 577, 578, 580, 585.

[147] MAMA 1, 382.

> (Cross) The noble (and) excellent sons Patrokles and Paul, like-minded in soul, left this splendid (funerary) marker. But you, being among mortals, overlook the great saying of my sons in your sagacious wits, being subdued by the mild folly of parents. But my good sons who are so dear to my heart built this with great anguish, after I toiled with the palms of my hands at this inscription. They did not achieve great glory with dawn coming on (i.e. in one night's labor). (In consequence) they have received great glory from heaven by the grace of God, and rejoice in the kingdom of heaven with Christ, the king of all. Greeting, happy man! For the end of life shall overtake you. For they did not accomplish this (task) among mortals for the sake of their parents (alone).

The Greek *paideia* had to await the coming of Christianity before it penetrated the countryside around Laodikea. The epigram contains many phrases from Homer's *Iliad* such as "in (your) sagacious wits" (ἐνὶ φρεσὶ πευκαλίμυσι) which were all fairly easy to come by. One of the boys was called Patrokles in honor of the Achaean hero Patroklos, the other Paul for obvious reasons. Their heroic character in erecting their father's funerary monument and epigram lay not only in completing the marker. The effort put into the poem proved to be quite daunting. We discover Homeric ideals of manhood in the choice of such phrases as "great glory" (μέγας κῦδος, with the first word put incorrectly in the masculine rather than neuter gender), an allusion to Achilles. The father can hardly have composed this after his death, as the epigram implies. The sons or some local rustic with a grammar school education concocted it. The authorship had imperfectly memorized certain sections or phrases found in the *Iliad*, but no one could be found to *transcribe* it into proper written form. Hence most of the diphthongs are misspelled. Even so the inscription reveals intelligent syntactical variation and earnest feeling. It reflects the sort of effort one would expect of a rural family that was well-educated by its lights and fairly prosperous, as the stonecutting of the monument is quite impressive. The synthesis of Greek *paideia* and Christian belief was not a phenomenon only of the cities, but reached the *territorium* of Laodikea as well.[148] In none of this does there emerge the familiar monastic aversion to the Homeric poems because of their explicit description of sacrificial ritual. The teaching of Hypatius of Rufinianae that the "just thing" rather than the art of education

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[148] Cf. infra, Ch. XI, Sect. 3 (The Ledjā) on the state of rural education in the Provincia Arabia. More generally, see: W. Ensslin, "The Senate and the Army," *Cambridge Ancient History* 12 (Cambridge 1939), 66f.

(ἡ τέχνη τῆς παιδεύσεως) should prevail in Christian discourse was not observed in eastern Phrygia.[149]

The villages of eastern Phrygia that lay farther away from Laodikea and outside the Axylon seem generally to have had later dates of Christianization, perhaps well after 400, a periodization consistent with what is said about Hypatius' forays into the deeper rural areas of Bithynia and probably northern Phrygia. These villages lie toward the Galatian borderlands. The evidences of cult apparent in their epigraphy has some interesting connections with Late Antique local Christianity.

The most noteworthy eastern Phrygian village was perhaps Orkistos, to which Constantine the Great had granted a separate urban charter because the Christian religion prevailed there. It had previously been a village in the *territorium* of pagan Nakolea.[150] The Christianization of Orkistos' new *territorium* is difficult to trace. The cult of the ubiquitous Attis is mentioned through his epithet Ouenaouias in the Phrygian part of a bilingual funerary relief and inscription, as is Dyounsis Iskeiket (cf. the Indo-European root of the English "sky") or Ouranios.[151] The stone calls upon the two deities to "bless these funerary rites". The latter divinity, cognate to the Greek Dionysus, was the Phrygian guardian of tombs. The recategorization of these deities will claim our attention later. A later Christian prayer inscribed on a church pillar reflects the growth of literacy in Greek.[152]

The epigraphy of ancient Appola (present-day Choghu) poses some problems that concern the later period of Christianization in eastern Phrygia. One local votive inscription mentions the Phrygian goddess Ga, the Anatolian form of the Hellenic Gē or Gēs, a female chthonic deity.[153] In the ninth century A.D. some Christians at an undisclosed location sacrificed a dog to Gē, hoping that she would divulge the secrets of buried wealth. When the scheme failed, these folk confessed to their bishop, who wrote in turn to patriarch Photius in Constantinople about the incident.[154] Divinities recategorized as *daimones* thus continued to receive sacrifices when men sought to penetrate their respective spheres of operation.

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[149] Supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 1.

[150] Jones, *Later Roman Empire,* 91, 358, 719. For some new inscriptions at Nakolea, see: Drew-Bear, *Inscriptions de Phrygie,* 32ff.

[151] MAMA 1, 413. Cf. Drew-Bear and Naour, "Divinites de Phrygie," 1944ff.

[152] MAMA 1, 428.

[153] MAMA 1, 435.

[154] Photius, *Ep.* 1.20, PG 102, 788. Thanks to Leslie Brubaker for this reference.

Another inscription of Appola provides a link between Neo-Phrygian and Christian attitudes toward ancient tombs:[155]

> May the god strike at the eyesight of him who should mistreat the coffins or tomb or covered dwelling or trees, and at the life of his children. May he provide against the children (and) leave them a widow's livelihood and an empty house.

This undated text ultimately goes back to simpler Neo-Phrygian imprecations such as "Whoever to this tomb harm does, let him be accursed" (ιος τα μανκαι κακουν αδδακετ, τι ετιτ[τ]ετικμενος)[156] The protecting deity or collective spirits of the dead (δεως ζεμελως = θεοὶ καταχθόνιοι) were popularly believed to carry out the task of punishing the tomb-breakers.[157]

The inscriptions of Appola have a broader relevance. Elsewhere the terminology of the imprecation varies. For example, there is one from the village of Polybotus in eastern Phrygia that calls upon both Attis and the subterranean deities to punish the tomb-breaker (Αττιη κε δεως).[158] An important example comes from Iconium in Lycaonia (n.d.): "If anyone injures this stele, may he have to endure the subterranean gods' being provoked. . . ." (ἐὰν δέ τις τ[ὴν σ]τήλ[ην ἀδ]ικησ[ῇ] θ[ε]ο[ὺς] κα]τα[χθονί]ους [κε]χολωμ[έν]ο[υ]ς ἔχοιτο).[159] Such notions passed into Christian Atticist literature, as for example the epigrams composed by Gregory, bishop of Nazianzus in Cappadocia, on tomb-breaking. One of his poems calls upon the Furies ('Ερινύες) to torture the violator of the tomb.[160] The fictive speaker in another of these mentions "the attendant *daimones* who dwell in this mound of the dead man" (οἵ τε πάρεδροι δαίμονες, οἶ φθιμένου ναίετε τόνδε λόφον).[161] These *daimones* were sometimes invited to partake of funerary banquets (καταχθόνιοι . . . δαίμονες) (from an inscription at Hadriani in Phrygia).[162] These spirits, along with the souls of the dead named in the inscriptions, were thought to feed off the offerings burnt atop the funerary altars. In some instances large families are named. An inscription on such an altar (βωμός) in Galatia sums up these relationships with convenient brevity:[163]

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[155] MAMA 1, 437.

[156] Calder, "Corpus Inscr. Neo-Phrygiarum," 165.

[157] Calder, "Corpus Inscr. Neo-Phrygiarum," 207f.

[158] MAMA 1, 384. Cf. nos. 405, 406.

[159] Although the inscription has many gaps, Sterret's reconstruction is plausible. John R. Sterret, *An Epigraphical Journey in Asia Minor* (Boston 1888), no. 237. The meaning of "being tormented" will claim our attention in due course. A similar logic is found in the inscriptions of other districts. SEG 32 1288 (Thesmothonion, Phrygia, 1st–3rd c. A.D.). The purported unpleasantness of the state of the dead is reflected in an undated epigram copied from a tomb in Hadrianoi in Phrygia: "Mother, not even there with the subterranean *daimones* (καταχθονίοις μετὰ δαίμοσιν) should you be without a share of our gifts it were proper we should give you. Therefore I Nikomachos and your daughter Dione have erected this tomb and stele for your sake." Anonymous, *Greek Anthology* 7.333. Such tombs often had funerary altars, whereat foods would be burnt for the dead. For example, see: I.W. MacPherson, "Six Inscriptions from Galatia," *Anatolian Studies* 22 (1972), 22. In a funerary epigram composed by Gregory of Nazianzus, the fictive speaker calls upon the tombs and dust and bones and *attendant spirits* who dwell in the mound-tomb of the dead man (σήματα καὶ σποδίη καὶ ὀστέα οἵ τε πάρεδροι δαίμονες, οἳ φθιμένου ναίετε τόνδε λόφον) after opening by grave-robbers. *Greek Anthology* 8.205. Elsewhere, Gregory's poems call the Furies down on the tomb-breaker (*Gk. Anth.* 8.199) and query whether divine justice does not protect the dead from this (8.190). Three others are entitled "Against Tomb-Breakers" (8.176, 8.179 and 8.180).

> To the subterranean deities. Saturninus son of Doryphoros furnished the altars and burning places for himself and his wife and their children. One of the altars is for his brothers by way of remembrance. Good works by good men! Greeting, passer-by!

The beliefs and practices connected with the dead and subterranean deities thus extended across the entire central plateau of Asia Minor, running eastward from the headwaters of the Maeander, Lycus, and Cayster rivers in Phrygia through Galatia, Lycaonia, and Cappadocia to the foothills of the Taurus mountains. Each of these cultural zones had distinct and living local vernacular languages in the late third century and beyond.[164] The funerary customs derived ultimately in each instance from Indoeuropean religious ideas about burial and remembrance.

The Christianization of the urban *territoria* where the *nekropoleis* and altars lay posed problems for persons desiring to visit and honor family members who had died before the coming of the Christian catechumenate. Inscriptions rarely illustrate this point of conjuncture between the old and new religions, except in possible instances of Christians' carving crosses on pagan tombs to signify the continuity of family solidarity across this chasm of religious transformation.[165] The souls of the Christian dead might rise into the ether in the company of angels, but what about persons who had died before this?[166] The bishops and presbyters surely emphasized the old strictures about celebrating sacrificial meals with sundry divinities, *daimones*, and spirits of the dead,[167] but certain of Gregory of Nazianzus' other poems suggest that family solidarity prevailed over religious scruples that went against local custom.[168] Cutting crosses on tombs could not remove ecclesiastical odium from these acts, but could perhaps conceal the status of the pagan dead if done surrepititiously. In all this the rustic religious consciousness is exceptionally difficult to reconstruct. The village presbyters and their bishops could most probably count on a change of heart only with the coming of a new generation, or with artificially induced disruptions of rural society such as plagues, barbarian raids, earthquakes, and the like, after which a district could be partially recolonized with Christian peasants.

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[160] *Greek Anthology* 8.199.

[161] *Greek Anthology* 8.205.

[162] *Greek Anthology* 7.333.

[163] I.W. MacPherson, "Six Inscriptions from Galatia," 222.

[164] Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 993f. For criticism, see: Speros Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley-Los Angeles 1971), 45–49, with comprehensive bibliography.

[165] As suggested supra, this section.

Except for sporadic Isaurian raids, Asia Minor was spared such catastrophes all through the fifth century, or more properly 370–529.[169] Hence argument is on the side of cultural continuity. Ultimately, as Christianity prevailed and the distant generations were forgotten, the local churches made effective use of the argument that the *daimones* attracted to funerary altars might be "provoked" (ὀχλεῖν and derivatives) at the approach of Christians. The seventh-century life of Theodore of Sykeon iterates many examples of the dire fate awaiting villagers, for example, who used pagan *nekropoleis* as quarries for building materials. This taboo,[170] originally designed to prevent the Christian rustics' concourse with the pagan dead by way of sacrifice, developed into an ecclesiastically sponsored superstition that resulted in the hysterical "possession" of whole village populations who feared the provocation and liberation of those *daimones* by workmen and seekers after treasure-trove.[171] Whatever the psychological reality of these phenomena, such behavior corresponded at some level to earlier ideas of becoming ritually enthused or "possessed" by chthonic deities like Kybele and perhaps Attis, who was identified as the guardian of tombs.[172] This behavior reflected cultural habit as well as religious belief. In sixth- and early seventh-century Galatia, at least, the village presbyters and even the bishop of Germia summoned Theodore of Sykeon from his monastery, whereupon he dismissed the *daimones* thought to cause this "possession" by the ritual of exorcism.[173]

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[166] Cf. supra, Ch. II, Sect. 5, and Ch. IV, Sect. 1.

[167] It is worth noting that Ambrose, the archbishop of Milan, forbade Monica, Augustine's mother, to bring bread, wine, and sacrificial cakes to the tombs of martyrs on their festival days. Augustine, *Confessions* 6.2. It was a survival of the pre-Christian and Christian custom reflected in the *mensa* inscriptions of Roman Africa. A pre-Christian example is found in *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres*, ed. E. Diehl, 3 v. (Berlin 1925–31), no. 1570 (Satafis, 299 A.D.). Cf. Antonio Ferrua, *Nuove correzioni alla silloge del Diehl Inscr. Lat. Chr. Vet.* (Vatican City 1981), 37. For Christian examples, see: ILCV 3706–3725.

[168] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 2.

[169] The first Persian invasion of Asia Minor after the 3rd c. came only in 575. Trombley, "Monastic Foundations in Sixth-century Anatolia," 53.

[170] On "taboo-sickness" and the transmission of taboo ("touching phobia"), see Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, tr. James Strachey (Penguin Freud Library 13, London 1985), 79–82.

The other sites of eastern Phrygia provide a scattered but consistent picture of the religious transition. The village called Nea Kōmē ("New Village", present-day Gershulu) has an altar erected by the village manager (οἰκονόμος Νεοκωμητῶν) and other benefactors in behalf of the local salvation to the Mother of the Gods (σωτηρίας Μητρὶ θεῶν εὐχήν).[174] It is difficult to say if local devotions of this kind affected the Christian terminology found in an inscription on the high wall of a chapel near Polybotus: "Mother of God, help!" (Μή(τηρ) θ(εο)ῦ β(οήθει)).[175] Nea Kōmē became Christian by about 400. An inscription in Epic dialect commemorated a local presbyter or perhaps bishop:[176]

> (Cross) This is the marker of the God-fearing high priest Patrikios, who was allotted the sacred glory of the holy fathers after pursuing it for forty-eight years. May he dwell anew in the heavenly palace.

Once again it was characteristic of Christians to assign the souls of their dead to the parts in the upper aether rather than in the soil, and in this instance to install the cleric Patrikios (θ(εο)υδέος ἀρχιερῆος) in a Homeric-style mansion (αὐλή) that awakens images of a gateway, stoa, megaron, altar, and *tholos* building.[177]

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[171] The discovery of treasure was considered, in any case, to be an occult art guided by the power of the divinity or *numen*, as a law given at Constantinople on 2 March 390 indicates. Persons were thought to discover treasure "by the prompting of the divinity or the guidance of fortune" (*suadente numine vel ducente fortuna*). *Cod. Theod.* 10.18.3.

[172] This evidence is collected in Trombley, *Survival of Paganism*, 37–46.

[173] The explosions of "possession" hysteria may be related to a phenomenon called the "collective effervescence" by Bronislav Malinowski, "The Public and Tribal Character of Primitive Cults," in *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays*, ed. R. Redfield (Boston 1948), 35ff. Sigmund Freud applied psychoanalytic method to an individual case of "possession" of the 17th c. It is difficult to say at this stage how applicable this study is to collective behavior. Sigmund Freud, *A Seventeenth-Century Demonological Neurosis*, tr. James Strachy in Penguin Freud Library 14, London 1985, 383ff. Freud's *Totem and Taboo* throws light on such subjects as the dead as enemies. 107ff. The incident at Germia is discussed at length in Trombley, *Survival of Paganism*, 44–46.

[174] MAMA 1, 408 (2nd c. A.D.).

[175] MAMA 1, 387.

[176] MAMA 1, 412.

At present-day Bashara in eastern Phrygia the inscriptions tell a story of considerable flux. The only attested local deity is "the holy and just god", who, on a relief sculpture, wears a radiate crown and chlamys, and perhaps holds a staff.[178] The local economy had viticulture in addition to cereal and olive farming, and so must have worshipped the usual Anatolian deities like Attis, Dyounsis, and Kybele.[179] The characteristic Christian formula "here lies" (ἐνθάδε κῖτε or [κατά]κιτε) replaces the pagan term *heröeion* (ἡρωεῖον) on the funerary markers, which date from c. 400 onward to judge from the use of crosses.[180] Both attested Christian clerics originally came from other villages. The presbyter (?) (εἱερεὺς Θεοῦ) Maximus came from a site of otherwise unidentified location called Pazon.[181] The other, a certain Domnos, had been presbyter to the village of Eizikon in the *territorium* of the town of Meiros in the Tembris valley farther to the west.[182] This cosmopolitanism suggests a shortage of ecclesiastical personnel in the parts of Bashara. This might indicate, in turn, a relatively late date for the Christianization of this site and others round about.[183]

A Hellenic cosmopolitanism prevailed in the more westerly parts of Phrygia in pre-Christian times, before c. 300, this in the *territoria* of Dorylaeum and Nakolea.[184] The cult of Zeus Brontōn originated at Dorylaeum and spread in all directions into the countryside. He received worship as the god of agriculture, probably because of the local dependence on rainfall, at an important and centrally located shrine in the present-day village of Avdan (ancient Aouada?), where dedications to him in behalf of villages and individual persons have turned up. Zeus Brontōn also took over the task of guarding tombs that was more usually assigned to Attis and the subterranean deities.[185] The *territorium* of Dorylaeum shared a long common boundary with that of Nakolea, which also had Zeus Brontōn as its principal deity. It will be recalled that Constantine the Great had allowed Orkistos to secede from Nakolea because of great hostility to Christianity in the latter town.[186] The earliest Christian tomb in the *territorium* of Dorylaeum, that of Flavius Lorentius (4th or 5th c.), lies in the suburb of Mutalip some four kilometers to the north.[187] The man had apparently begun his career as a barbarian soldier (γεντιλίου = *gentilis*).[188] It would seem that Christians were interring their dead on the *north* side of Dorylaeum to keep them away from the routes leading southward toward the sanctuary of Zeus Brontōn at Avdan.

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[177] The term is also used for the tent of Achilles, the hut of Eumaios, and the cavern where Polyphemos dwelt.

[178] MAMA 1, 398.

[179] MAMA 1, 399.

[180] MAMA 1, 399, 402, 403.

[181] MAMA 1, 402.

[182] MAMA 1, 403.

[183] Cf. the manpower shortage of catechetical personnel in the mid 6th c. during the Christianization of Asia, Phrygia, Lydia, and Caria. Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World" 330ff. This is implicit in the fact that Syrians and Armenians, who did not speak the local dialect of Greek, had to be imported to Asia Minor. Ibid. 332.

[184] *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua V: Monuments from Dorylaeum and Nacolea,* ed. C.W. Cox and A. Cameron (Manchester 1937). Hereinafter cited as *MAMA 5.*

Our immediate attention is drawn to Avdan, where village committees and private individuals erected votive offerings to Zeus Brontōn.[189] A typical inscription runs: "The people of Masikēnōn. A prayer to Zeus Brontōn in behalf of their crops and property" (Μασικηνοὶ ὑπὲρ καρπῶν καὶ τῶν ἰδίω[ν] πάντων Διὶ [Β]ροντῶντι εὐχήν).[190] There is also an offering by a woman named Tata in behalf of her small children to Men Ouranios, the Hellenized form of the celestial (as opposed to chthonic) Attis.[191] It would not be surprising if this woman, with an Anatolian name, regarded Attis as her god, but saw him transformed into Men by the temple priests who presided over the Hellenistic cult. No remnant survives of the temenos. A Christian marble ambo slab of uncertain date has turned up on the site.[192] It perhaps belongs to a Christian basilica erected after a temple conversion on the site after c. 400. The only Christian inscription at the site runs: "(Alpha Omega) Lord, help!" (6th c. or later).[193] From the meagre evidence, it seems that the other rural sanctuaries in the countryside lying between Dorylaeum and Nakolea were Christianized at a later date or not at all.

Several typical votive inscriptions dedicated to Zeus Brontōn survive at Süpü Ören. One prays in behalf of the oxen.[194] In another a priestess (εἴερισσα) invokes the god to protect her own property and that of her village.[195] The temenos was not occupied by a Christian monk until the sixth century. The phrasing of his victory inscription suggests a temple conversion at that time, probably in connection with the program of catechization begun by Justinian the Great and executed by John of Ephesus between c. 538–566.[196] It reads: "Nikephoros the servant of Christ. Jesus Christ conquers! John" (Νηκοφόρ(ος) δοῦλ(ος) Χ(ριστο)ῦ. Ἰ(ησοῦ)ς Χ(ριστὸ)ς νηκᾶ. Ἰωάννης).[197] It is difficult to say when the temple cult ended at Süpü Ören. A date after 400 fits the local context. The pagans of the place will have continued to sacrifice a long time after this date. Nikephoros the monk will, like the many Syrian ascetics, have occupied the turf of a dying cult that needed one last push to topple it into cultural eclipse.

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[185] MAMA 5, xxxix. Cf. Drew-Bear and Naour, "Divinités de Phrygia," 1992–2013.

[186] Most of the Christian inscriptions at Nakolea seem to date from the 5th c. or later. MAMA 5, 308–312.

[187] MAMA 5, 77.

[188] Jones, *Later Roman Empire* 651f.

[189] MAMA 5, 124–146.

[190] MAMA 5, 126.

[191] MAMA 5 132. Cf. Drew-Bear, *Inscriptions de Phrygie*, 29ff.

[192] The editors suggest a 4th or 5th c. date for the latter. MAMA 5, 145.

[193] MAMA 5, 144.

The other sites in the *territoria* of Dorylaeum and Nakolea are not enlightening as regards the end of the local cults. Among these places is ancient Serea (present-day Kuyucak), which has nothing but pagan inscriptions dedicated to Apollo, Herakles, Papia, and varieties of Zeus. Most of the texts are votives in behalf of the safety of villagers, personal property, and oxen.[198] Large estates existed in this area, but it is unknown whether they were imperial or private.[199] The renters and *coloni* perhaps went over to the new religion between 375–450. The church of Serea imitated the format of local pagan prayer in its own epigraphy, as one text reveals: "In behalf of the prayer and safety of Diphas the deacon" ([ὑπὲρ εὐχ]ῆς κὲ σωτηριας Διφα διακόνο[υ]), which seems to belong c. 380–420.[200] This phrase certainly implies many other phenomena of *Ritenchristianisierung* that can only be conjectured about.

The full extent of the transformation by which the Christian God, his martyrs, and archangels were fitted into the scheme of old formulae and seasonal rituals is revealed in a complete text found at Alexandria Troas in Hellespontus:[201]

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[194] MAMA 5, 152.

[195] MAMA 5, 155.

[196] Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 329–34.

[197] MAMA 5, 165. The inscription dates from 500 A.D. or later, it seems, because of the presence of the omicron-upsilon ligature.

[198] MAMA 5, 175, 178, 181, 182.

[199] MAMA 5, 185.

[200] Mostly square uncials. MAMA 5, 191. The editors suggest broader *termini* (4th–6th c.).

[201] Henri Grégoire, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques chrétiennes d'Asie mineure* (Paris 1922), no. 2. This collection hereinafter cited as *IGC-As. Min.*

> In behalf of the vow of the villages and people of St. Tryphon, and of those who make vow offerings in it (?), and of all their households whose names God (alone) knows. Holy, holy, holy. God help us! Amen.

Nothing much had changed since the pre-Christian period except for the substitution of the martyr's name—St. Tryphon having been executed during the Decian persecution of 250—for that of the deity, and the subjunction of the Trisagion (ὑπερὶ εὐχῆς τῶν χωρίων καὶ τοῦ λαοῦ τοῦ ἁγίου Τρύφωνος καὶ τῶν καρποφορούτων ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ πάντων τῶν ὕκων αὐτῶν . . .). The villages mentioned in the inscription comprised a unit on an estate perhaps of temple lands that later reverted to the imperial *res privata* before being given to a local see or monastery. The identity of the deity is unknown.[202]

To return to western Phrygia, the rustics in the *territorium* of Nakolea brought offerings to the urban temples at least through the early fourth century. We learn of villagers from Aezēnōn (᾿Αεζηνοὶ ἐνχώριοι) making a vow to Men, the local Hellenized Attis.[203] One cosmopolite, perhaps sometime between 212–300, came to the temple of Theos Hypsistos to fulfil a vow made in Rome.[204] This deity, too, looked after oxen and personal property,[205] as did the ubiquitous Kybele, to whose temple a committee came from the village of Skala (Σκαλατηνοὶ [Μ]ητρὶ Κυβέλη εὐχὴν περὶ βοῶν).[206] Sometimes a single individual was selected to carry out this task as curator or superintendent (ἐ[πιμελουμέ]νου(?)).[207] The distinctly Anatolian deities persisted in this amalgam of cults just as they did later, after Christianity reached the countryside.[208] Tenant farmers lived in the parts around Nakolea.[209] Their attempts to scrape a living out of the soil coupled with dissatisfaction with high rents paid to pagan landowners residing in Nakolea perhaps aided the Christianization of the *territorium*, as it did in northern Syria, Egypt, and North Africa.[210] The new religion first appears in the Nakolean countryside in the form of a personal confession. A slab in the Tembris river valley southwest of Dorylaeum tells the story eloquently. It is written in six lines of graffiti with the words "Lord, help!" at the beginning and end. It contains the names of four Christian men and one woman who endorsed this plea in terms that rejected the old formularies about the safety of oxen, fields, seasons, and specialized deities, and affirmed the Christian God with a simple, all-encompassing plea (post c. 375 at the earliest).[211] One cannot be sure whether these folk were urban travellers or simple farmers, but such acts of testimony aided the transformation of polytheistic rural culture for anyone who could read a bit. By way of contrast, the retention of the old formularies as in the sixth-century inscription from Alexandria Troas began with a conscious choice to preserve the old meanings known to the rustics.

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[202] Michael Rostovtzeff, *Studien zur Geschichte des römischen Kolonates* (Archiv für Papyrusforschung, Beiheft 1, Leipzig-Berlin 1910), 288, n. 1.

[203] MAMA 5, 208. Cf. nos. 209, 210.

[204] MAMA 5, 211. Cf. Drew-Bear and Naour, "Divinités de Phrygia," 2032–2043.

[205] MAMA 5, 212.

[206] MAMA 5, 213.

[207] MAMA 5, 218.

[208] Cf. Kybele also as the "goddess of the four seasons" (Μητρὶ Τ[ετρ]απροσώπῳ ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπ[ων] κὲ τετραπόδων). MAMA 5, 101.

[209] μισθωτὴς τῆς κώμης ὑπὲρ τῶν ἰδίων Διὶ βροντῶντι εὐχή. MAMA 5, 219.

[210] Infra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 2, and Ch. IX, Sect. 1. Cf. W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church* (Oxford 1952), 48–111.

III. The Territorium of Hierapolis c. 400 in Light of the Aberkios Legend

The life of Aberkios, the late second-century bishop of Hierapolis (fl. c. 160–170) is the reconstruction of a historical life and career. It was based on a long biographical funerary inscription, which stood in common view during the late fourth century, was later lost, and finally rediscovered in the twentieth century.[212] The phenomena of social and religious life that the hagiographer used to fill out the rudimentary narrative contained in the inscription were drawn mostly from the experience of his own lifetime c. 350–400, along with certain events of the Great Persecution c. 303–313. Although full of anachronisms, the life of Aberkios is an important witness for the time in which it was composed. The fourth-century data reflect conditions in the *territorium* of Hierapolis during the time of Julian the Apostate, who disestablished the Christian shrines there. The reports are the only plausible fragments about the conflict between pagan and Christian in Phrygia that can be securely dated. The stories about troubles with the urban Hellenes of Hierapolis seem to have been inferred from real events, but which of course could not have happened in the second century, when Aberkios lived. Our concern here lies with the *territorium* of Hierapolis in the years c. 350–400, when a very real bishop, whom we might call quasi-Aberkios, began to penetrate the countryside and set up Christian shrines that competed with those of the rural Hellenes.

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[211] MAMA 5, 320.

[212] For a summary of the problem and relevant literature, see Calder, "Early Christian Epitaphs" 25f. Text citations derive from *S. Abercii Vita*, ed. Theodor Nissen (Leipzig 1912).

Medicinal qualities were attributed to Anatolian hot springs throughout Hellenic and Christian antiquity.[213] The cures given there were attributed to chthonic deities of various kinds, including, it seems, Attis. The archangel Michael seems to have supplanted his cult at a spring near Colossae during the era of Christianization. This process of replacement came only after the synoikism of competing cults.[214] As the waters were considered essential for recovery from disease, such acts of compromise were needed for Christians to use the sacred waters. Our quasi-Aberkios of the fourth century found important work of this kind in the countryside around Hierapolis:[215]

> Again after a few days St. Aberkios travelled with the brothers to the villages and hamlets round about, especially those immediately neighboring his city, since he had heard that many persons there were kept bed-ridden by various sicknesses. After going out and treating them, he discovered that they had no bath-building and because of this they were suffering. So he went to the place called Agros along the river, knelt down, and prayed. . . . After he had completed the prayer, there was at once a sudden peal of thunder as the air became clear, just as all those standing nearby declare, and with the thunder a spring of hot waters bubbled up in the place where St. Aberkios had inclined his knees. All present praised and glorified God for what had happened. And St. Aberkios ordered those [dwelling] in Agron to dig deep cisterns for conveying the hot waters and for their being used to wash.

No one who knows the character of the Phrygian cults can fail to miss the pregnant pre-Christian associations of Aberkios' miniature liturgy. Many shrines to chthonic deities already existed at hot springs in the Phrygian countryside. What Aberkios and the

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[213] Trombley, *Survival of Paganism*, 48f.

[214] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 4. The thesis of Hellenic-Christian synoikism at sacred springs has now been definitively proven, or so it seems. Phokas, Praetorian Prefect of Oriens appointed in 532, left an annual legacy of 80 *solidi* to a Christian church of the Angels, although himself a Hellene. Cyril Mango observes: ". . . it may be significant that Phokas, who was considered a pagan, should have made a donation to a church of the Angels, for the cult of archangels and angels was common ground on which Christians, pagans and Jews could all meet." The site receiving the donation is not entirely certain. Mango suggests the shrine at Germia as one possibility, and that of the holy Myriangeloi outside Pessinus in Galatia as the other. Mango favors Germia, which was the site not only of an angel cult, but also of sacred springs. Such a construction is perfectly consistent with the thesis argued in Ch. II, as noted above. Cyril Mango, "Germia: A Postscript," *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 41 (1991), 297.

[215] *V. Abercii* 39, (Nissen 30f.).

Christians of his congregation needed was not a bath-house (βαλανεῖον) per se, but one dedicated in the name of the new God with his martyrs and archangels. Aberkios thus sought to avoid synoikism with the associated dangers of Hellenic angelolatry or Attis-worship, and to establish a new and independent Christian shrine. Finding water in the subsoil was not the most difficult task. Our quasi-Aberkios devised a ritual that summed up the powers of local sky deities such as Men Ouranios (the celestial Attis) and Zeus Brontōn by his summoning of the thunder (βροντή) and those of the chthonic deities like Attis again by causing the hot spring (ἡ πηγὴ τῶν θερμῶν ὑδάτων) to rise up. This wonder, which the hagiographer simply calls "the event" (τὸ γενόμενον), placed the cisterns (λάκκους) and the bath-house eventually built under the tutelage of Christ.

It is quite probable that the villages and hamlets nearest the city (εἰς τὰς πέριξ κώμας καὶ χωρία, μάλιστα τὰ γειτνιάζοντα τῆς πόλεως αὐτοῦ) already had some Christians in them by the mid-fourth century, the demographic fact needed to justify the work of construction, which the villagers of Agros perhaps undertook as their tithe or sacred offering of first-fruits. Thus, the seemingly timeless events narrated about this quasi-Aberkios were closely engaged to the ongoing religious confrontation in the *territorium* of Hierapolis. The Christianization was aided by the "brothers", that is by the clergy of the see, who will have supervised the shrine and pronounced the Christian liturgy there. A Christian "magic" that controlled the subterranean waters and provided cures will have preserved the Christian rural communities—whose members might otherwise have frequented pagan shrines—and also have gained conversions.[216]

The subsequent course of Christianization may be guessed from the epigraphic record discussed in the previous section, which suggests that the *territoria* of the Phrygian cities went over to the new religion between 375–450. The life of Aberkios mentions a Christian vintner named Trophimion with whom the bishop took bread and wine.[217] This report is consistent with the known agriculture of cereals and the vine in the parts of Phrygia outside the Axylon steppe. In later years the Christian spring at Agros is said to have received an imperial endowment from the empress. If so, this happened thanks to one of the imperial ladies of the Constantinian house and not Marcus Aurelius' wife Plotina as reported in the text:[218]

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[216] Hence the occasional title of "wondrous" (θαυμάσιος) borne by Anatolian bishops. Cf. E.Varinioglu, "Inschriften von Stratonikeia in Karien," *Epigraphica Anatolica* 12 (1988), no. 87.

[217] *V. Abercii* 56, (Nissen 40).

> [St Aberkios] asked her to send a master-builder for constructing the bath-house in the place called Agros-on-the-River, where he had knelt down and prayed, and where the springs of hot water had bubbled up, and even that a provisionment of 3000 *modii* [in cereal grains per annum] be apportioned to the poor of his city.

The grain probably came from the imperial estates located in Phrygia Salutaris:[219]

> When the bath-house was completed in the said Agros, it was from that time onward no longer called Agros-on-the-River, but rather Agros Thermon ("Agros of the Springs"). The grain provision stayed in supply until the years of Julian the Transgressor. Since that man not only persecuted the Christians but also begrudged such gifts, he ordered that the grain being furnished to them be broken off. From that year (certainly 362) the gift has been withheld.

The gift had been modest compared with the 30,000 *modii* in grain and 60,000 *sextarii* in wine that Julian assigned to the temple of Kybele at Pessinus.[220] Julian was clearly pursuing a systematic policy of transferring the imperial gifts previously allocated to Christian shrines from them to his favorite Hellenic temples. After his death, and during the years of emperor Valens in the East (364–378), these grants were not switched back, but were rather used for other purposes. This previously unnoticed event in the *territorium* of Hierapolis provides another important instance of the semipermanent character of Julian's attempt to disestablish the Christian churches of the East.[221]

Two other Christian shrines were in existence outside Hierapolis in the later fourth century. The first of these, probably spuriously attributed to Aberkios, was a second Christianized sacred spring:[222]

> It happened that he was one day on a high mountain which is opposite the city of Lysia. When he and those with him became thirsty, he knelt down and prayed. And a spring of pure water bubbled up and all who had thirsted were satisfied from it. The

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[218] *V. Abercii* 65, (Nissen 46, lines 14–19).

[219] *V. Abercii* 66, (Nissen 47, lines 6–14).

[220] Julian the Apostate, *Ep.* 22 ("To Arsacius, Highpriest of Galatia") (Wright 3, 68–71). This text is analysed supra, Ch. II, Sect. 5.

[221] Other instances include the reunification of Gaza with its seaport town Maiuma and the extensive resotration of temples in the Hauran district of the Provincia Arabia. Supra, Ch. III, Sect. 1, and infra, Ch. XI, Sect. 2.

[222] *V. Abercii* 75, (Nissen 52, lines 9–15).

> place was called Gonyklisia ("Spot of Kneeling") from that time onward.

The mountain in question had perhaps been a pagan "high place" (ὄρος ὑψηλόν). The limestone of the geologically young mountains of Asia Minor frequently admitted torrents that forced their way upward and could therefore be easily tapped.[223] The second shrine in question was the monumental tomb of Aberkios, a square structure with a Christian altar beside it (τύμβον ἰσοτετράγωνον καὶ βωμόν).[224] Here the Christian rustics will have occasionally heard the liturgy recited amidst the tombs of martyrs and other Christian dead. Whatever the date of the monument, it was the prominent feature of a late fourth-century Christian *nekropolis*. It bore a well-known and great inscription commemorating the deeds and travels of Aberkios.[225]

The new religion took hold of the Phrygian countryside through a gradually increasing institutional presence of the church. In an exorcism performed by Aberkios inside Hierapolis, he is said to have exiled the *daimones* of possession to a "wild mountain" outside the city limits (καὶ εἰς ἄγριον ὄρος ἀπέλθατε).[226] These *daimones* will have remained there with the Hellenic gods of Hierapolis in their rural shrines, which remained sites of religious awe and sacrifice until the coming of Christian shrines like those at Agros Thermōn and Gonyklisia.

IV. The Territorium of Pessinus in Galatia Salutaris

The two Galatias lay directly to the east and northeast of Phrygia. Their countryside seems to have become generally Christian between the accepted *termini* of 375–450. They provide a peculiar case in that the epigraphic evidence is scanty at best, and in the fact that the most detailed local source, the life of Theodore of Sykeon (fl. 542–613), treats the region after it was mostly, but not completely, Christianized.[227] Many pagan villages still existed in 362, when Julian the Apostate donated large quantities of cereal crops and wine to Arsakios, the high priest of the cult of Kybele at Pessinus. These comestibles were designed more than anything to provide for the poor in revitalizing this important fertility cult in the face of

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[223] On springs in Phrygia, cf. Ernest Chaput, *Phrygie, Exploration archéologique I: Géologie et géographie physique* (Paris 1941), 91–94.

[224] *V. Abercii* 76, (Nissen 53, line 2f.).

[225] *V. Abercii* 77, (Nissen 53f.). Cf. Ch. VII, n. 212.

[226] *V. Abercii* 11, (Nissen 10, line 10f.).

[227] For a summary, see Trombley, *Survival of Paganism*, 32–50.

Christian almsgiving.[228] There is no reason to suppose anything unusual, apart from local cultural tendencies, about the Christianization of Galatia after the termination of these grants, which may have remained in force for some decades after Julian's death.[229]

There was a great "high place" outside Pessinus, the administrative capital of Galatia Salutaris, called Mount Dindymus. Inscriptions, roofing tiles, and, significantly, a well have turned up here. The artefacts point to a date of occupation in the fifth century or later.[230] The site became a Christian *nekropolis* during this period.[231] The Christian inscriptions here mostly have crosses and the "here lies" (ἐνθάδε κατάκιτε) burial formula and sometimes "servant of God" (δουλή Θεοῦ).[232] Among the Christian dead were a woman of senatorial family (λαμπροτάτη), a female seller of food and drink (προπιναρέα), and Menander the presbyter. The secure Christianization of this high-place belongs in the fifth century. One inscription belongs earlier, but its date is disputed.[233] Mount Dindymus' relatively late occupation by Christians stands in contrast to the town of Pessinus proper, where Christian folk using the same formulae turn up by c. 365,[234] and where a church lector is named shortly after 400.[235]

At the site called Tutlu, off in the direction of Germia, was the pre-Christian tomb of a woman, Asklepia Attōnos.[236] Her father bore a variant of the name of Attis, whose likely cult at Germia was supplanted around this time by that of the archangels.[237] At Tutlu as well one finds the tombs of men with the Iranian names Ochos and Mandana. The parts of Galatia were being colonized by Iranians during the Roman imperial period.[238] It will be demonstrated in the next section that colonists of this ethnic group remained an important religious and cultural substrate during Late Antiquity in First Cappadocia.

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[228] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 5.

[229] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 2.

[230] J.H. Strubbe, "Inscriptions inédites de la région du Mont Dindymos en Galatie," *Mnemosyne* 34 (1981), 107–126. Hereinafter cited as Strubbe, "Inscriptions." Mount Dindymos seems to have been another "high place" whose tutelary deity was Kybele, the Mother of the Gods, who bore such epithets as "Dindymean Mother" and "Mountain Mother". For a modern sense of the religious awe evoked by the mountain, see P. Lambrechts, "La quartième campagne de fouilles à Pessinonte (Turquie)," *Türk Arkeloji Dergisi* 18 (1969), 138f.

[231] Lambrechts, "Fouilles à Pessinonte," 138f.

[232] Strubbe, "Inscriptions," nos. 1–4.

[233] Strubbe, "Inscriptions," no. 6.

[234] Strubbe, "Inscriptions," no. 7.

[235] Strubbe's date, "Inscriptions," no. 8.

[236] Strubbe, "Inscriptions," no. 10.

[237] Cf. supra, Ch. II, Sect. 4.

[238] Strubbe, "Inscriptions," nos. 12, 13. There was a temple conversion c. 400, if William M. Ramsay's conjecture is right, elsewhere in Galatia. He mentions this

V. Eastern Anatolia: Cappadocia and Isauria

The Christianization of eastern Anatolia, comprising the two Cappadocias and Isauria, did not deviate much from the pattern found in the central steppe or western coastlands in terms of chronology or the methods used, except for one marked difference. In the countryside of First Cappadocia, with its administrative capital at Caesarea, there were many Iranians who continued to adhere to fire-worship for the duration of the period under consideration here, 370–529. Let us first consider the more normative features of Christianization before dealing with the Mazdaeans.

The Christian communities in the towns of Cappadocia dated back to the late second century A.D., but the countryside resisted religious change longer. Cappadocia was, like the central Anatolian plateau, a semi-arid steppe suitable for stock rearing. Relatively few towns lay about, the principal cities being Caesarea Mazaka and Tyana, the provincial capitals of First and Second Cappadocia. The local Cappadocian language belonged to the Indo-European family and had a close affinity to Phrygian and Lycaonian.[239] Many factors of local culture therefore militated against easy Christianization. Yet by 372, the non-Iranian communities around Caesarea were accepting the new religion. The lack of epigraphic data prevents a very detailed assessment of this process.

Our only evidence for the Christianization of rustic Cappadocians lies in the syncretistic style of worship that still prevailed in the parts around Caesarea in 372, in the village of Venasa, where a young deacon called Glycerius acquired a considerable following. Three letters of Basil, archbishop of Caesarea, set forth the salient characteristics of this "cult". At no point in the controversy,

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in connection with a temple of Mannes-Men. "Studies in the Roman Province of Galatia," *Journal of Roman Studies* 14 (1924), 172–75.

[239] The Indo-European substrate of southern Asia Minor was a combination of the Hittite, Luwian and Palaic languages. Vladimir I. Georgiev, *Introduction to the History of the Indo-European Languages* (Sofia 1981), 194 ff. Lycian and Lycaonian are related and descended from Luwian. Ibid. 206. Pisidian is unrelated. Ibid. 215. Nothing of Cappadocian seems to have survived in the inscriptions, and it is consequently difficult to classify. The languages of the surrounding areas were all nevertheless Indo-European. Cf. Jones, *Later Roman Empire* 993, indicating that in one of his homilies, Basil of Caesarea mentions the indigenous language as being well known to his congregation.

however, did Basil denounce Glycerius for sacrifice or apostasy. William Mitchell Ramsay makes much of this mainly liturgical disagreement,[240] taking it as a sign of eclecticism and syncretism among the recently Christianized.

The principal complaint against Glycerius, the deacon of Venasa, lay in the style of hymning and dancing adopted by his following of young men and women, who roamed about the steppe performing acts of devotion that offended the village presbyter, the chorepiskopos, the fathers of the women, and finally Basil himself:[241]

> The festival of Venasa was being celebrated, and as usual a vast crowd was flocking thither from all quarters. [Glycerius] led forth his chorus, marshalled by young men and circling in a dance, making the pious cast down their eyes, and rousing the ridicule of the ribald and loose-tongued.

Ramsay developed a detailed analysis of this business:[242]

> Moreover, the *synodos* of Venasa was one of the most ancient and famous religious meetings in Cappadocia. The priest of Zeus at Venasa was second in dignity and power only to the priest of Komana; he held office for life, and was practically a king. A village inhabited by 3,000 *hierodouloi* was attached to the temple, and round it lay a sacred domain that brought in an annual income of fifteen talents. . . .
>
> Christianity directed the religious feeling of the country towards new objects, but preserved the old seasons and methods. A Christian festival was substituted for the old festival of Zeus, doubtless the occasion when the god made his annual *exodos*, or procession round his country. Basil, unluckily, pitiless of the modern scholar, does not name the month when the festival took place, and the sole memorials of it that remain to complete the account of Strabo are, first, a brief invocation to the heavenly Zeus, found on a hill-top, to guide us (along with other evidence) to the situation . . .; and, secondly, these letters of Basil, to show how the Cappadocian Christians developed the pagan festival.
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> At this great religious ceremony of the whole country, Glycerius brought forth his followers, singing and dancing in chorus. Such ceremonies were necessarily a part of the old religious festival of Zeus, and their existence in it, though not *attested*, may be safely *assumed*; accordingly there is every probability that they were not novelties introduced by Glycerius, but were part of the regular Cappadocian custom. . . . Hymns undoubtedly were substituted for the pagan formulae, and not a hint is dropped by Basil that the dancing

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[240] Willam M. Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170* (New York-London 1893), 449–464.

[241] Ramsay, *Church in the Roman Empire*, 452.

[242] Ramsay, *Church in the Roman Empire*, 457–59.

> and singing were not of a quiet and modest character. The license of the old pagan ceremonies had been given up; but in many respects there was no doubt a striking resemblance between the old pagan and new Christian festival. . . . In the old pagan festival the leader of the festival wore the dress and bore the name of the deity whom he represented. . . . Glycerius, as Basil tells us, assumed the name and dress of a "patriarch". The meaning of this seems to be that the director of ceremonies . . . was equipped in a style corresponding to the pagan priest, and assumed the character of the highest religious official, the patriarch.

Paucis verbis, early rural Cappadocian Christianity developed liturgically out of pagan custom. The archbishop reacted to this by seeking to impose a more ascetic and regularized style of worship lying in the mainstream of Greek Christianity. This new cosmopolitanism had little tolerance for local custom.

It is possible that the Christianization of the *territorium* of Caesarea began in earnest only after c. 365, and that the Cappadocians, at least, became Christian rather quickly, thanks to Basil's systematic efforts to encourage correct forms of devotion, including martyr festivals that celebrated the victory of the new religion. Thus, the *panegyris* of Eupsychios, Damas, and companions was celebrated every 7 September in the city and *territorium* of Caesarea by 376 (ὧν ἡ μνήμη δι' ἔτους παρὰ τῆς πόλεως ἡμῶν καὶ τῆς περιοικίδος πάσης τελεῖται).[243] These men had been executed by Julian the Apostate for demolishing the local Tychaion.[244] Martyr relics destroyed the potency of sacrifice at pagan shrines, and their festival swallowed up the old seasonal rituals designed to ensure the peace of the gods. It is not surprising, then, that Basil suppressed Glycerius the deacon's liturgical excesses. It is possible, as well, that Basil opposed the Christianization of the primaeval apotropaic rites designed to protect tilled fields from hailstorms and floods. In a letter to a presbyter of Nikopolis in 376, he refers to these events as "accidental evils" (ὅσα τῶν κακῶν αὐτοσχέδια).[245] As such they will have been susceptible neither to pagan nor Christian rustic magic.

The fire-worshippers or Mazdaeans of Cappadocia belonged to a wave of Iranian settlers who colonized the region before the first century A.D. They kept their religious institutions through the fifth century. There is a remarkable correspondence between what the geographer Strabo has to say about them and what later writers tell. Strabo indicates:[246]

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[243] Basil, *Ep.* 252 (Deferrari 4, 8–21).

[244] Basil, *Ep.* 252 (Deferrari 4, 18–21, n. 1). See also *Ep.* 100 (Deferrari 2, 185, n. 1).

[245] Basil, *Ep.* 240 (Deferrari 3, 422f.)

> Numerous is the nation of the Magoi there [in Cappadocia] who are also called Puraithoi ("fire-worshippers"). There are also many temples of the Persian gods. In Cappadocia they do not sacrifice with the sword, but with a type of log, striking [the victim] as though with a club. There are also fire-temples (*pyraitheia*), a number of notable sacred enclosures. In the middle of these is an altar [*bōmos*) on which there are many embers, and the Magoi keep the first unquenched. Upon entering them daily they sing for nearly an hour while holding a bundle of rods in front of the fire and wearing felt tiaras that have cheek pieces coming down on either side to the extent of hiding the lips. These rites are practiced in the temples of Anahita and Omanos. There are also sacred enclosures in these temples. The idol of Omanos leads the procession. These things I have seen. . . .

The *magoi* of Cappadocia disappear from the historical record until Basil of Caesarea notes their existence again in a letter to Epiphanius of Salamis (in 377). Referring to these folk as Magousaioi, he reports their being scattered "nearly throughout our entire countryside," or rather the *territorium* of Caesarea (πολύ ἔστι παρ᾽ ἡμῖν κατὰ πᾶσαν σχέδον τὴν χώραν διεσπαρμένον):[247]

> The Magousaean people, whom you saw fit to mention to me in another letter, is considerable among us, being scattered throughout nearly the entire countryside and being migrants whom we introduced a long time ago from Babylonia. They practice peculiar customs and are unmixed with the rest of the population. Reason is wholly ineffective with them because they have been tamed by the deceiver to his own will. For there are neither scriptures nor teachers of doctrine among them, but they are raised by irrational custom, with the boy being taught the impiety by his father. Aside from these things which are evident to all, they refuse animal sacrifice as a defilement, but slaughter the animals they need [for meat] through the hands of others. They seek unlawful marriages and reckon fire as a god. There are other such things. None of the *magoi* will tell us even to this day that their descent is from Abraham, but they call a certain Zarnouas instead the founder of their race. Wherefore I have nothing else to report to your honor about them.

In the culturally isolated environment of Cappadocia the Mazdaeans had gradually lost the use of the Zoroastrian scriptures and the priesthood. Little syncretism of belief had arisen in the intervening centuries. "Zarnouas" is perhaps an etymologically corrupted and shortened form of Zoroaster.

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[246] Strabo, *Geography* 15.3.15.

[247] Basil of Caesarea, *Ep.* 258 ("To bishop Epiphanius") (Deferrari 4, 44–47). (= PG 32, 952C–953A).

One suspects deliberate irony or understatement in Basil's words and a degree of ignorance about the subject. He could hardly admit the existence of fire-worshippers (καὶ τὸ πῦρ ἡγοῦνται θεόν) living among his own Christian rustics with equanimity to Epiphanius of Salamis, the arch-hunter of heretics. The *magoi* did not mix freely with the rest of the population, living instead in separate communities and refusing to intermarry with the Cappadocians (ἄμικτοι ὄντες πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους). None of the other local pagan cults had any meaning for them, nor did the lack of scriptures vitiate their cult or social fabric. Basil admits that "reasoning with them is wholly ineffective." The missing element in his report is the *linguistic* character of the Magousaioi. If they had continued to speak a dialect of Middle Iranian, they would have remained resilient to the very essential Hellenizing component of Basil's program of uprooting the rural cults.

The fire-temples that figure so prominently in Strabo's *Geography* are now absent. The Magousaioi did not practice animal sacrifice (ζωοθυσία), but regarded it as a defilement of earth and sky, which along with fire had the status of divinites in Zoroastrianism. The missing temples turn up in Basil's Eighty-first Canon, where provision is made for persons "completing pagan oaths and tasting unlawful foods offered by them to the magian idols" (ὅρκους ἐθνικοὺς ἐπιτελέσαντες, καὶ ἀθεμίτων τινῶν γευσάμενοι τῶν ἐν εἰδώλοις τοῖς μαγικοῖς προσενεχθέντων αὐτοῖς).[248] If we accept Basil's testimony in the letter to Epiphanius, persons other than the Magousaioi were performing the sacrifices. Apart from the Cappadocian pagans still in the countryside, it must have been the "barbarians", who were most certainly contingents of pagan Isaurians, that compelled their captives to perform sacrifices in empty fire-temples.[249] We learn that Cappadocian Christians cooperated in this "without great necessity" (ἄνευ ἀνάγκης μεγάλης), "grasping at the [altar] table of the *daimones* and swearing pagan oaths" (ἁψάμενοι τῆς τραπέζης τῶν δαιμονίων, καὶ ὀμόσαντες ὅρκους Ἑλληνικούς). Basil prescribes eight years' penance for those who apostasized under torture, eleven years for those who did so voluntarily. These will have been mostly rural folk who could not reach any fortified place when the lightning-like Isaurian raiders descended on their settlements.[250]

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[248] Basil, *Ep.* 217 (Deferrari 3, 260–63).

[249] In an entry belonging to c. 353–54, Ammianus Marcellinus mentions Isaurian raids in eastern Anatolia. *Res Gestae* 14.2. Cf. *Res Gestae* 27.9.6. For an Isaurian raid against Nikopolis in northern Syria, see infra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 4.

[250] See previous note.

Basil's Eighty-first Canon accounts not only for the "missing" Magousaean fire-temples (Πυραιθεῖα), but also the cultic tendencies of the recently Christianized Cappadocians, some of whom reverted to their old religious ways without much compulsion. Unlike Julian the Apostate, the barbarian Isaurians provided no new martyr cults for the *territorium* of Caesarea. The *chorepiskopoi* of the archdiocese are said to have numbered only fifty. They certainly had their work cut out for them in these parts.

The survival of fire-worship into the fifth century is plausible in light of all that Basil of Caesarea has to say, and has nothing against it for all the reasons given above. Priscus of Panium probably confirms this in his account of an embassy sent by the Sassanid Great King Peroz to emperor Leo I in 464.[251] This aggressive monarch demanded free religious practice for Zoroastrians living in the Eastern Roman Empire, along with the usual requests for funds to defray the cost of a fortress called Iuro-eipaach in the Caspian Gates:[252]

> There also arrived [an embassy] from the monarch of the Persians, having as its cause those persons of their race who had migrated, that is the *magoi* who lived in the Roman empire from times long past. [The problem was that the Romans] wished to draw them away from their ancestral laws and customs, as well as from their ritual in respect to the divine; then too, the Romans trouble them constantly and do not allow them to kindle what they call the unquenchable fire according to their customary law. . . . The Romans replied that they would send someone to negotiate with the Parthian monarch, that refugees would no longer be [admitted] from among the [Persians]; nor would the Romans harass the *magoi* about their religious practices.

This demarche resulted in a grant of religious toleration to the *magoi* of the empire. The rule evidently remained in force until the Persian War of 527–532. Irreconcilable political differences with Kavad and a manifest desire to Christianize the empire will have caused Justinian the Great to require the baptism of all fire-worshippers after the renewal of the emperor Zeno's edicts against paganism in 529.[253] Priscus, or perhaps the excerptor of his histories, failed to stipulate the localities in question. They may have included parts of Roman Armenia and Mesopotamia, but the only known large concentrations of Zoroastrians dwelt in Cappadocia. Living in the empire "from times long past" (τῶν Μάγων τῶν ἐν τῇ Ῥωμαίων γῇ ἐκ παλαιῶν οἰκούντων χρόνων), these folk were a settled population and not recent limitrophic settlers. This, too, points to the Cappadocian communities. The comprehensive legislation of Theodosius the Great in 392 had, in time, permitted the successors of Basil of Caesarea to restrict the Mazdaean divine liturgy (τῆς περὶ τὸ θεῖον ἁγιστείας) and the kindling of the "unquenchable fire" (τὸ παρ' αὐτοῖς ἄσβεστον καλούμενον πῦρ) in rural Cappadocia. The fire-worshippers had, despite this, kept their religious and ethnic identity. Their resistance to Christianization did not pass unnoticed in Ctesiphon.

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[251] Priscus of Panium, Fr. 31 in *Historici Graeci Minores* 1, ed. L. Dindorf (Leipzig 1870), 341–43.

[252] Priscus, *Fr.* 31 (Dindorf 1, 342, lines 2–10 and 22–26.

[253] I can find no plausible earlier date. Zeno's laws agains Hellenic religion c. 481–88 quickly shelved. Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 6. The Persian War waged by the emperor Anastasius 502–507 lacked the bitterness of the later conflicts. That monarch sought in any case to cultivate political consesus and was not inclined to persecute.

It is quite possible that the culturally resilient Mazdaeans of Cappadocia capitulated to the Justinianic law bitterly and grudgingly. Historians have been hard put to explain the rise of dualistic Paulicianism in the early ninth century, often searching vainly for some mythical heresiarch called "Paul" or some variant of that name.[254] The Mazdaeans of eastern Anatolia may well have provided the fertile ground for a dualistic hybrid of Christianity and fire-worship. The amalgam will have begun to percolate in the years of breakneck Christianization between c. 538–566 that saw John of Ephesus claim 80,000 converts in western Asia Minor.[255] Rapid conversions claimed for administrative purposes led not only to *Ritenchristianisierung*, but to locally popular theological syntheses as well, particularly in districts where catechetical manpower was in short supply and local culture proved resistant.[256]

It remains in conclusion to consider the pagan Isaurians who compelled, as it seems, the sacrifices mentioned by Basil of

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[254] See the study of Paul Lemerle, "L'histoire des Pauliciens d'Asia mineure d'après les sources grecques," *Travaux et Mémoires* 5 (1973), 1–144. This article does not discuss the cultural substrate of Paulicianism.

[255] For a defense of this figure, see Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 330f.

[256] It is worth asking, as well, whether the domed, square structure of the typical small fire-temple did not in fact become a useful model for domed Christian churches in eastern Anatolia. If so, we have another important example of *locally* significant Christianization of rite. Cf. Kurt Erdmann, "Feuerheiligtum—Kreuzkuppelkirche," *Neue Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte des 1. Jahrtausends I: Spätantike und Byzanz* (Baden-Baden 1952), 53–70. There is no safe ground for denying the demographic reality of Mazdaeans in Cappadocia. For the proliferation of Mazdaean communities throughout Armenia, Iberia, and Albania down to the 3rd. c. A.D., see: Marie-Louise Chaumont, "Conquêtes sassanides et propagande mazdéene," *Historia* 22 (1973), 692–709.

Caesarea to be performed. It is impossible to conceive of any circumstances under which the Isaurians might have become Christian before 400, that is until their gradual pacification had been achieved in about the mid-fifth century. The original Alahan monastery seems to have played a role in this process from c. 425 onward, to judge from a Christian stone altar found there.[257] The Isaurians were a mountain folk who will have lived as pastoralists, taking up raiding only when overpopulation forced them down onto the plains of Lycaonia and Cappadocia, and then onto the sea and into the parts of northern Syria. Ammianus Marcellinus writes at length about these forays between c. 353–368.[258] The ferocity of their organized brigand bands (*vastoriae manus*) suggests an un-Christianized folk, nor were their craggy settlements easily accessible to prospective catechists. I am inclined to view the mass execution of Isaurian captives in 353/4 by throwing them to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre of Iconium as an indirect proof of their paganism, as a law of Constantine the Great had specifically forbidden the execution of Christians by this method.[259] There is, finally, the evidence of personal names. An Isaurian raiding band reached Şiş, a village in the *territorium* of Nikopolis in Euphratesia, around the year 400. Symeon Stylites the Elder is said to have gone out to remonstrate with the enemy outside the walls of the *kastron*. He introduced himself with the words: "I am a Christian." Such an assertion would have had no meaning except that the Isaurians were not. We know that the names of the Isaurian leaders were Bos and Altemdorus. Of these Bos is a barbarian, non-Christian, non-Hellenic name, whereas Altemdorus might be a corruption of Artemidorus.[260] There is no reason to suppose that a random group of mountaineers from Isauria were Christian at a time when many sedentary villages of farmers were still pagan.

John Chrysostom is said to have engaged in evangelical activity among the residents of the Taurus mountains after his deposition from the see of Constantinople (20 June 404) and exile to Koukousos.[261] The cults of the region were seemingly a mixture of

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[257] Cyril Mango has come around to the view that the Alahan site was not initially a monastery. "Germia: A Postscript," *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 41 (1991), 298–300.

[258] Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 14.2, 19.13, and 27.8.10.

[259] Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 14.2.1 and 27.9.6. Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 1017f.

[260] "Syrische Lebensbeschreibung des Hl. Symeon," tr. Heinrich Hilgenfeld, in *Das Leben des heiligen Symeon Stylites*, ed. Hans Lietzmann (Leipzig 1908), 83f.

[261] George of Alexandria's life of Chrysostom is discussed supra, Ch. IV, Sect. 2, and Appendix II. I have rejected F. Halkin's argument that George of

Hellenic, Iranian, and unknown indigenous religion. Koukousos was a small fortress in the Taurus range near Arabissos in Third Armenia, a spot that had had to endure many sieges by Isaurian raiders. The precise ethnic character of the local hill folk is unknown. Our source, George of Alexandria, observes:[262]

> There was a great number of idol-worshippers in that land, and others who worshipped trees and groves, and others yet who worshipped the sun. [John heals a man who worshipped the sun.] So upon seeing the prodigious and paradoxical event, all the men of that nation believed in the Lord of one accord and quite a numerous multitude was baptized. He appointed seven bishops for them and a large number of presbyters and deacons to assist the people (*plēthos*) with a church liturgy and a holy and bloodless sacrifice. He also arranged hymns of the psalmody for them and gave them the divine liturgy. For he discovered by the grace of God that some of them knew the Greek language, and so he prepared them to translate the New Testament and psalter into their own language, that they might have knowledge of the divine scripture. He enjoined them to learn the psalter thoroughly, that they might sing from its odes in the churches, saying: "They are able to translate the Old Testament in part." And in a few days they blossomed forth into the faith of the savior so that they outdid many of those who had accepted the faith before them. [John performs many other cures.]

There was a relatively dense rural population in the parts around Koukousos, some of them praying to household idols, others praying to the tutelary spirits of trees and groves. The "sun-worshipper" (ἡλιολάτρης) whom John is said to have healed may in fact have been a Mazdaean. It is difficult to credit George of Alexandria's story that Chrysostom, whose patriarchate had included the diocese of Pontica, defiantly consecrated seven bishops and other clergy, although it is not impossible. To judge from his letters, Chrysostom's guards gave him a great deal of practical freedom. En route to Koukousos he made many local friends like the noble woman Seleucia, widow of the Praetorian Prefect Rufinus (ob. 395), who protected the patriarch and his retinue from Isaurian bands at her fortified estate in the suburbs of Caesarea.[263] Receiving clients and composing plaintive letters were Chrysos-

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Alexandria invented this episode, along with that dealing with Chrysostom's supposed visit to Athens.

[262] George of Alexandria, *V. Chrysostomi* 59 (Halkin, 237–39). The personal onomastics found in the inscriptions of Koukousos are not helpful in resolving this riddle. The names are mostly Greek or Anatolian. Sterret, *Epigraphical Journey*, nos. 278–286. (Present-day Göksün).

[263] John Chrysostom, Ep. 14 ("To the deaconess Olympias"), PG 52, 613.

tom's only possible diversions once at Koukousos, hence his catechetical work.

The local rustics were not Greek speaking for the most part, but George of Alexandria fails to indicate their language.[264] The composition of a paraphrastic redaction of New Testament verses for local use is not impossible. More important is the un-Hellenized character of the population around Koukousos where, in consequence, the new religion could be disseminated only by bilingual catechists. The local dialect is unknown: it was either Armenian, Cappadocian, or Isaurian. The province of Third Armenia lay in a borderland zone where many linguistic groups mingled, and where Syriac was a *lingua franca* along with Greek.

The few bits of evidence suggest that regions of great ethnic diversity where few Hellenic cults had existed began to receive the new religion only from the early fifth century onward. This entailed resorting to Christianization of rite and devising local paraphrases for Christian scripture. Where the catechists failed to establish a cultural dialogue, groups like the Iranian fire-worshippers of Cappadocia remained pagan until the reign of Justinian, it seems, who enforced administrative conversions on them. In such instances pre-Christian ritual and belief persisted in a variety of syncretisms, of which few can be positively identified. The causes of this phenomenon lie in the local geography as well. The relative sparsity of Greek cities in eastern Anatolia, a direct consequence of lack of water supplies and thus the impossibility of intensive agriculture, left the region less acculturated to the claims of the new Greek religion.

VI. Conclusions

The great temples of Asia Minor suffered varying degrees of impoverishment during the invasions of the third century, but for the most part seem to have survived intact.[265] The great turning point in the religious destinies of these places came with Constantine's destruction of Licinius in 324 and the transfer of temple properties to the *res privata*, whence they were redistributed to the new imperial aristocracy that was forming at Constantinople and in some instances to the local churches. It seems quite likely that the districts traversed by Hypatius of Rufinianae in the mid-fifth century had belonged to civil officials who took little interest in the Christianization of their estates even as late as 443–446. It is difficult indeed to say precisely when the pagan villages around Pessinus in Galatia began to accept the new religion, but it may also have been in the fifth century.[266]

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[264] George of Alexandria, *V. Chrysostomi* 59 (Halkin, 238).

[265] Cf. the continued operation of the shrines of Apollo at Klaros, Didyma, and other sites. Robin L. Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (London 1986), 171ff. and 575ff.

The great "wonders" (θαύματα) or workings of the Asian divinities lay deeply embedded in the folk memory all through the period 370–529. One thinks of the shrine of Artemis Kindyas near Bargylia in Caria, whose *horoi* or perimeter markers were thought to prevent the fall of rain inside the temenos.[267] In the sixth century Theodore of Sykeon would use stakes shaped like crosses to achieve the same effect with regard to hailstorms and floods around his monastery.[268] A more discreet species of continuity is seen at the temple of the Koloenean Artemis near Sardis, where the Basket of Artemis was celebrated. It was a great service (μεγάλη ἁγιστεία) in which the celebrants seem to have made the basket head-dress of the goddess dance on their own heads (φασὶ δ' ἐνταῦθα χορεύειν τοὺς καλάθους).[269] The systematic partition and reassignment of temple lands did not prevent the rustics from keeping the tradition of this festival in inner Bithynia as late as 443–446.[270] The great annual festivals (πανηγύρεις μεγάλαι) of Hekate at Stratonikeia in Caria[271] and Artemis Pergaia[272] at Perge in Pamphylia will have lived on in the folk culture until at least that time, but probably lingered longer in view of the memories of Artemis that persisted in mid-sixth-century Galatia.[273] As Theodoret of Cyrrhus asserts, the *panegyreis* of the great martyrs supplanted those of the "falsely named gods", but the *termini post quem* for these substitutions will remain the object of conjecture unless new evidence comes forward. The chthonic Attis, who as Men in Hellenized guise had priesthoods, temple lands, and slaves at Antioch and Sebaste in Pisidia,[274] literally went "undergound", being identified and merged with the daimonic protectors of tombs known as the "subterranean divinities", but at the same time surviving in new guise in the iconography of Michael the archangel, who had now become the dispenser of ground waters at ancient sacred springs.[275]

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[266] Supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 4.

[267] Strabo, *Geography* 14.2.20.

[268] Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 340f.

[269] Strabo, *Geography* 13.4.5.

[270] Supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 1.

[271] Strabo, *Geography* 14.2.25.

[272] Strabo, *Geography* 14.4.2.

[273] Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 334f.

[274] Strabo, *Geography* 12.3.31.

In eastern Anatolia, similar types of flotsam permeated the newly Christianized ethos. The memories of the liturgies of the Venasian Zeus in Cappadocia have already been noted in connection with the practices of Glycerius the deacon.[276] At Komana in Armenia, there had been a deeply entrenched cult of the goddesses Ma, Aphrodite, and Artemis. A great procession called the "exodus" of a goddess's image took place in the presence of many suppliants.[277] This system of rural liturgies permeated the culture of Armenia and Cappadocia, and it is not surprising that Christian *panegyreis* like that of Sts. Eupsychios, Damas, and companions developed in a similar fashion.[278] Elsewhere, at Kastabalē near Tyana, the metropolis of Second Cappadocia, it was said that the priestesses of the Perasian Artemis used to walk with naked feet over hot embers without feeling any pain.[279] Isolated cases of this phenomenon are known in popular Greek religion even in the twentieth century.[280] The rather wide interval of twenty centuries between this and Strabo's report in the *Geography* does not significantly alter the argument that Christian catechists bodily took over many Hellenic liturgies during the period under discussion in this work.

The literary sources become abundant again in the second half of the sixth century. The historian is struck by two features of Greek religiosity at that time. First, apart from the well-known forays of John of Ephesus' catechists into Asia, Caria, Lydia, and Phrygia, where perhaps 1,000 villages were Christianized between 536–566, the impression gotten is that of a recently, but nevertheless mostly, Christianized rural society. Secondly, if one reads the sources thoughtfully, he becomes aware of a vast array of Hellenic liturgies that had become a seemingly natural part of Anatolian Christianity, including even animal sacrifices.[281] These phenomena are not significant as examples of "paganism" *per se*, but rather as signposts that enable us better to understand the adaptive mechanisms of Christianization and how they interacted with the fears and expectations of the agricultural population. The earlier stages of this dialectical process between c. 370–529 have been analysed in this work. The final word on this subject awaits the systematic study of sixth-century, medieval, and Neohellenic evidence.[282] It is not inconsistent with this prospectus to conclude with two telling examples.

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[275] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 4.

[276] Supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 5.

[277] Strabo, *Geography* 12.2.3 and 12.3.36.

[278] Supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 5.

[279] Strabo, *Geography* 12.2.7.

[280] There is no discussion of this practice in Lawson, *Greek Folklore and Religion*.

[281] Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 338–41.

In the first instance, there is a marble plaque from the *territorium* of Philadelphia in Lydia bearing an invocation for the exorcism of hail. Its content and letter forms are consistent with a sixth-century date:[283]

> Exorcism for the turning back of hail. I adjure you, *O daimon*, who presides over the suddenly turbulent air, when you thunder and cause lightning flashes and send hail out from the sky! I adjure you, O *daimon*, in the name of the egg of a male-begotten bird! I adjure you, the furnace-mouthed *daimon*, go outside the *horoi* of the village of Ennaton! I adjure you by the power of the God of Hosts and of the throne of the Lord, go outside the *horoi*! I adjure you . . . by the elder and the younger, go outside the *horoi* of the village of Ennaton! I adjure you by Ouphridiel and . . .! I adjure you by the letters of the planets, alpha, epsilon, eta, iota, omicron, upsilon, and omega, go outside the *horoi* of the village of Ennaton! You archangels Raphael, Ragouel, Istrael, Agathoel, make a seal around . . . the village of Ennaton.

The invocation relies on a peculiar melange of Hellenic and Judaic-Christian powers and divine names. It would seem that the reliability of any one of these in isolation was not entirely trusted to be efficacious, and so all were summoned. The egg of the male bird figures in the magical papyri, and the archangels listed here are unknown and dubious except Raphael. There seems to be little doubt that this exorcism (ἐξορκισμός) was devised in the synthetic religious milieu posited above. It was evidently inserted on the perimeter of the village whose tilled fields were clearly marked by boundary stones (ὅροι). The "*daimon* presiding over the suddenly troubled air" ([δαίμων ἀέ]ρος ταρασσομέ[νου αἰφνιδίως ἐφιστάμενος]), which was also called the "furnace-mouthed *daimon*" (καμινόστομος), was none other than the local sky god, one of the variants of Zeus, whose hostile kratophany took the shape of a black cloud full of hailstones blasting its way toward Ennaton and seemingly animate.[284] The rustics could not risk the ruin of even one year's harvest, as they knew from bitter experience, and so a great array of heavenly powers is summoned to their aid. It was the archangels who would fight the last battle, their task being to "seal around" (περισφραγίσετε). The Greek verb has the strictly Christian connotation of raising the sign of the cross in every direction, and we should assume that the marking of a "magic circle" with four cross-shaped stakes accompanied the recitation of the prayer. There will have been four of them, one for each compass direction,[285] over each of which one of the archangels named was supposed to preside. The stage was thus set for a great celestial battle between the kratophany or "daimonic rage" of the old god and the sky-bound guardians of the new dispensation. Even so, the prayer is darkly hedged with a provision for the aid of the grim planetary powers thought to control the elements of the lower sky. We cannot say for certain when or if the adjuration failed, but crises of confidence in the Powers were doubtless a frequent occurrence.

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[282] Cf. Supra, Ch. II, *prooem.*

[283] Grégoire, *IGC-As. Min.* 341 ter.

[284] Cf. F.W. Hasluck, "Unpublished Inscriptions from the Cyzicus Neighborhood," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 24 (1904), no. 4. The inscription appeals to Zeus Chalazios Sōzōn in behalf of good crops and the avoidance of harm to them. Zeus is both the sender of hail and the protector from it, a perfect example of ambivalence and of the scope for hostile kratophanies if the god wer not fittingly propitiated.

It seems likely that an important task confronting Theodore of Sykeon (6th c.) was the final Christianization of syncretistic liturgies such as this one, which seems to have been composed and displayed without much ecclesiastical supervision. Even so, it will have been tolerated during the period of accomodation that preceded definitive Christianization.[286]

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[285] There is an instance in the Latin life of St. Columban of the use of a "magic circle" to fend off heavy rainfall at the time of the harvest, but St. Columban used Christian "men full of religion" instead of cross-shaped stakes. *(Ille quattuor plenos religione viros per quattour angulos messis praeponit . . .) Vitae Columbani Abbatis Discipulorumque Eius* 1.13, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum* IV, ed. Bruno Krusch (Hannover-Leipzig 1902), 78.

[286] The theatre of the cosmic battle is expressed in another text of uncertain provenance: "Exorcism of the god of hail. There was lifted from Bethlehem a dark cloud (μάβρον νέφος) full of hail, emitting thunder and lightning. And an archangel of the power of the Lord confronted it, saying: Where are you going, dark cloud full of hail, emitting thunder and lightning? It said to him: I am going to the parts of the place of the vineyard of X. to wither the garden, to destroy trees and their shoots, and to destroy fruit plants and to work every evil. The archangel of the power of the Lord said to it: I adjure you by the invisible God who made heaven and earth and the sea and all that is in them. I adjure you by the four pillars that support the throne of God and by the river of fire: do not go to the parts of X.'s place, but go away to the wild mountains where the cock crows not and the herdsman does not speak, where he is not heard, by the glory of the great and celestial God! Amen." Grégoire, *IGC-As. Min.* 341 ter. commentary. The importance of this text for understanding Theodore of Sykeon's use of a "magic circle" against the "wild" cloud that "attacked" the tilled fields of the village of Reake is patent. Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 340f. Such phenomena were thought, once again, to be nothing more than manifestations of enraged divinities that no longer received sacrifices from their former rustic suppliants, as Theodoret of Cyrrhus observes elsewhere. Cf. infra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 2.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ARABS AND ARAMAEANS IN THE SYRIAN COUNTRYSIDE

The *territoria* of the Syrian cities have thus far yielded the fullest body of epigraphic evidence on the persistence of the old Semitic polytheism.[1] Hand in hand with this material goes a rich array of narrative texts, both Christian and pagan, that compensate for the gaps in our knowledge that epigraphic studies alone cannot fill. The different varieties of evidence demonstrate conclusively that the period between about 365–425 was the crucible of religious transformation for the Syrian peasantry.[2] These folk seem mostly to have been freeholders, although some examples of tenant farmers turn up in the sources as well. The preponderance of evidence suggests a bilingualism in Greek and Aramaic. The inscriptions of the Syrian provinces (mainly First and Second Syria) are almost invariably in Greek. In contrast, the number that turn up in Syriac, mostly from the late fifth century onward, is trifling. The ancient literature treating the phenomena of Christianization is quite tendentious, but regardless of genre or religious conviction it is emphatic about the nature of the transition, and so it is possible to come to firm conclusions about the social and cultural factors in play. Let us then consider the different witnesses to Christianization.

I. Libanius on Polytheism in the Territorium of Antioch in 386

Libanius, the rhetor of Antioch, criticized the methods by which the *territorium* of Antioch was being Christianized in his Oration 30, "To the Emperor Theodosius on the Temples."[3] It is one of the very few Hellenic documents on the subject, and is fundamental for understanding the religious transition that took place between 365–425 in the Limestone Massif east of Antioch, a subject analysed in a later chapter on a sub-regional and site-by-site basis.[4] Libanius delivered the oration privately, it seems, in 386, before its publication. It expresses a deeply felt outrage at the methods used by the monks who had begun to penetrate the Syrian backlands in the years immediately after the death of Julian the Apostate in 363, but particularly during the patriarchate of Flavian of Antioch (381–404), who turned a blind eye to the extralegal methods used by the monks to disrupt sacrifices at religious festivals and pull down temples. Libanius' account sharply disagrees with the official Christian view of these events that later found its fullest expression in Theodoret of Cyrrhus' *Historia Philotheos* ("Lives of the Syrian Monks").[5] Libanius' picture of the monks' aggressive acts, which included pillage, mayhem, and even murder, is similar in some ways to that drawn of Shenute of Atripe's forays in the middle Nile basin, but quite at variance with that in Asia Minor.[6] Libanius could, however, cite few specific incidents. Our concern here is with the social, material, and cultural realities of Semitic polytheism c. 386, and not with Libanius' more theoretical arguments about the direction of imperial policy.

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[1] Discussed infra, Ch. X passim.

[2] H. Drijvers, "The Persistence of Pagans Cults and Practices in Christian Syria," *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period*, ed. N. Garsoian *et al.* (Washington, D.C. 1982), 35–43. Edmund S. Bouchier, *Syria as a Roman Province* (Oxford 1916), 77ff., 117ff., 130ff., 245–77. More recently: J.H.W. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch; City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford 1972), 224–42. Such brief discussion as turns up in the other literature will be noted when relevant.

[3] Libanius, *Selected Works*, tr. A.F. Norman 2 (London 1977), 92–151. Hereinafter cited as Libanius, *Or.* 30.

We are better informed about the earliest Christians than the last pagans of the Antiochene through the epigraphy. Identifiably pagan inscriptions after the 360's are extremely rare.[7] It is probable that those who accepted Christianity between 365–425 demolished most traces of their previous belief at the instigation of the rural presbyters (περιοδευταί) who turn up in some relatively early inscriptions.[8] Pagans are thus underrepresented in the epigraphy for the entire period in question. Some allowance has to be made, as well, for the monks' acts of destruction. By the end of the fourth century, Christian ascetics had begun to build habitations in the Dana valley, which lies at the geographic center of the Limestone Massif.[9] It cannot be said whether Libanius had these men in mind, or others who operated farther afield in Euphratesia and Osrhoene. He is in any case our best informed witness about the survival of cults c. 386. Libanius mentions no rural gods by name, but many of them were the cognates of deities like Zeus Madbachos, the local Baal worshipped at the temenos atop Djebel Sheikh Berekat, the pagan "high place" that dominates the Dana plain from the north, and his female associate Symbaiytelos, the Semitic fertility deity thought to preside over the parts around Kefr Nabo in the Djebel Sim'ān district.[10]

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[4] Infra, Ch. X passim.
[5] Infra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 2 passim.
[6] Infra, Ch. IX, Sect. 1 and supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 1.
[7] Infra, Ch. X, Sect. 1–5.
[8] Infra, Ch. X, Sect. 1–5.
[9] Infra, Ch. X, *prooem.* and Sect. 2.

It is certain that the rustics were still making sacrifices in 386, although Libanius argues that these were not of the legally proscribed sort. In theory a type of rural magistrate charged with enforcing the law dealt with complaints of this kind (οἱ σωφρονισταί).[11] They seem to have been unable to restrain monastic bands from fanatical acts of destruction. In defense of the monks' victims, Libanius inquires:[12]

> Who has seen any of these persons who have been plundered sacrificing at the altars as the law does not allow? What youth, what elder, what man, what woman, what person living in the same stretch of country who does not agree with those who perform sacrifices to the gods, who of those (living) in the parts nearby?

His question contains two important admissions about the religious landscape of the countryside. The first is that pagan altars still stood (τεθυκότας ἐπὶ τῶν βωμῶν)[13] along with the temples. Secondly, some rustics—we cannot tell whether they lived in the same villages (χωρία) or simply shared fields in the stretches of countryside adjoining their abodes (ἀγροί)—*disagreed* about sacrifices, that is, *they had become Christians* (τις τῶν τὸν αὐτὸν οἰκούντων ἀγρὸν οὐ συμφερόμενος τοῖς θύσασι τὰ περὶ τοὺς θεούς). It is sometimes assumed—and there is one bit of evidence that seems to corroborate this rather dubious point—that villages tended to accept the new religion *en masse*, presumably by the vote of the headmen. This is contradicted by the dated "One God" inscriptions of the Limestone Massif, which turn up at all different dates in the same villages and testify to recent acts of adhesion to Christian monotheism.[14] Libanius' statement suggests that rural solidarity prevailed over disagreements about religious allegiance, that is, few Christian rustics were ever known to accuse their pagan neighbors of sacrifice. Libanius' statement should be taken as an indirect reference to what everyone knew was going on, as it is inconceivable that some people did not sacrifice at the altars.

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[10] Infra, Ch. X, Sect. 1. Libanius is preoccupied with Hellenized urban deities like the Tyche, Zeus, Athena, and Dionysus. *Or.* 30.50 (Norman 2, 146f.). The temples of these divinities were still intact in 386 (τὸ τῆς Τύχης τοῦτο σῶν ἐστιν ἱερὸν . . ., etc.).

[11] Libanius, *Or.* 30.12.

[12] Libanius, *Or.* 30.16.

[13] The perfect participle with the definite article suggests that the altars were still standing in 386. The archaeological evidence everywhere bears this out. Cf. Ch. VIII, Sect. 2.

[14] Infra, Ch. X, Sect. 1-4.

Libanius' definition of the legally acceptable sacrifice has been quoted above.[15] The festivals of the gods were still celebrated with sacrifice not long before 386.[16] Libanius uses a euphemism to describe these events in more recent times: "So when the customary day called (καλούσης τοίνυν τῆς εἰωθυίας ἡμέρας) . . . they took heed, and honored the day and the shrine (τὸ ἕδος) without risk."[17] Altars will of course have existed in the houses of the headmen where the festivals (αἱ ἑορταί) were celebrated. It was usual on these occasions to burn incense (μετὰ πάντων θυμιαμάτων) on altars, a practice that was still legal in 386.[18] The explicit provisions of the law forbade other acts, specifically blood sacrifices, the burning of victims, the offering of meal, and pouring libations only.[19] All other acts of polytheistic ritual except magic were protected by the principle that in banning a specific act the legislator permitted every other act not explicitly forbidden by the law (ἀλλ' ἓν εἰπὼν δεῖν μὴ ποιεῖν τἄλλα πάντα ἀφῆκας).[20] Other implicit freedoms included singing hymns and calling upon the gods by name. While the legalisms cited by Libanius are cogent, it is not surprising that monks refused to recognize such distinctions. If most pagan rustics submitted to the law, there were always some few who did not, and the monks regarded the latter as the enemies of mankind for summoning *daimones* with their sacrifices.

The scholar can hardly enter the mind of the typical pagan rustic in order to discover his subjective feelings about the violation of the *pax deorum* inherent in the laws against public sacrifice. Libanius' statements on the subject nevertheless provide some ground for understanding, if only a tentative one. The difference between "popular" and "high cultural" religious thought is less than might be supposed. It is difficult, then, to suppose that some rustics were not deeply troubled by these developments.[21]

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[15] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 1.

[16] Libanius uses the imperfect tense. *Or.* 30.17.

[17] The term for "shrine" can refer to a "seated statue", but perhaps also an altar.

[18] The Theodosian law of 8 November 392 definitively forbade the burning of incense on altars. *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.12.2.

[19] Libanius, *Or.* 30.17.

[20] Libanius, *Or.* 30.17.

[21] For some relevant texts, see supra Ch. I, Sect. 1. See now: K. Harl, "Sacrifice

Libanius is concerned primarily with rural temples in his oration, and many of his descriptions have parallels in the other literature about temple conversions. His main argument begins with a sort of anthropology about primitive man and the foundation of temples in the "high places" (τὰ μετέωρα) selected for habitation.[22] Elsewhere he cites specific examples of temples being destroyed. He observes: "So many temples have been destroyed in so many stretches of country (ἀλλ᾽ ἐξήρηται τοσαῦτα τοσούτων ἀγρῶν ἱερά) by the monks' insolence and drunken violence and greed and their not wishing to keep self-control."[23] These charges are difficult to substantiate from extant evidence, and the first example cited by Libanius is apparently that of an *urban* temple, that of Asklepios at Beroia just east of the Limestone Massif. He argues with vehemence that the statue of the god had received no sacrifice. The principle was established later in 399 that statues that had not been the object of sacrifice could not be indiscriminately destroyed.[24] The law came too late for Libanius (ob. 391) and was in any case issued to the governor of Africa Proconsularis, becoming widely known in the Roman East only after the publication of the Theodosian Code in 438. Libanius generalizes from this one case to affirm that "no one has sacrificed a victim, yet temples great and small alike in which persons who are ill rested themselves (i.e. the shrines of Asklepios) are destroyed" (τέθυκε μὲν ἱερεῖον οὐδείς, . . .).[25]

It is certain that Hellenes grudgingly approved the conversion of temples to civic uses rather than see them destroyed.[26] Libanius frames a similar argument, advising that the typical temple be converted into an *officium* for tax collection in order to preserve it as the focal point of urban traditions.[27] He then goes on to criticize those who execute the destruction of temples[28]

> . . . as an army waging war on its own stones (i.e. those of the temples) and a general in command summoning it against (build-

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and Pagan Belief in Fifth- and Sixth-Century Byzantium," *Past and Present* 128 (1990), 7–27.

[22] Libanius, *Or.* 30.4 (Norman 2, 102f.).

[23] Libanius, *Or.* 30.21 (Norman 2, 120f.).

[24] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 2. *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.18.

[25] Libanius, *Or.* 30.23 (Norman 2, 120–123).

[26] The pagan poet Palladas rued the transformation of a certain Tychaion into a tavern, but other Hellenes might have dismissed the act with a sigh of relief. *Greek Anthology* 9.180.

[27] Libanius, *Or.* 30.42. Libanius' statement is perhaps a bit ironic, as the right of taxation had been taken away from the cities in large measure. Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 732–34.

[28] Libanius, *Or.* 30.43 (Norman 2, 140f.).

> ings) standing to a great height (and erected) long ago with great zeal, whose completion gave the excuse for holding a festival under previous emperors.

This contemporary and pointed reference alludes to archbishop Marcellus' destruction of the Zeus temple at Apamea and his subsequent war against the rural shrines of Second Syria some years before his death in 388.[29] It is not apparent, however, that Marcellus' fighting bands included monks.

Libanius treats the case of one certifiably rural temple "on the Persian frontier".[30] It was of such size and strength of construction that rustics took refuge in it during the wars with Persia and the Lakhmid Saracens. Libanius—who had not seen the building—reports that the interior decoration of the ceiling and its statuary rivalled that of the Serapaeum in Alexandria.[31] It is not difficult to dissociate the hearsay and special pleading from the facts as given. Libanius felt unable here to accuse the monks of direct complicity in the demolition of this building.

What then of the monks' behavior? Libanius' characterization of it is at variance with the received Christian tradition as exemplified in Theodoret's *Historia Philotheos*. Not only were the latter's monks sober and pious, but they generally operated alone or in small groups when they entered the shrines of Semitic polytheism.[32] Perhaps Theodoret's monks displayed more respect for the law than the more common sort, but definitive evidence is lacking on this point. Libanius' report contains a mixture of precise detail and exaggeration:[33]

> These black-robed Furies eat more than elephants and by the size of their drinking cups create toil for those who accompany the drinking with hymns, and they hide these acts with a pallor devised by their craft. While the law, O emperor, remains and keeps its force, they attack the temples carrying beams and stones and iron bars, and those without these impliments apply their hands and feet to the task. Then, after unhampered plundering, after the rooves are torn down,

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[29] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 3. Libanius thus seems to be giving a *terminus ante quem* of 386 for the destruction of the temple at Apamea. The principle enunciated in Libanius' remarks here had already been recognized in a law of 382 addressed to the *dux* of Osrhoene, but was being applied inconsistently. *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.8. Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 2. It is not apparent from the other sources, however, that Marcellus of Apamea's fighting bands included monks. Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 3.

[30] For reference, see next note. I cannot accept A.F. Norman's suggestion that the temple lay in Edessa, for Libanius is emphatic about its being outside the fortifications and hard against the frontier.

[31] Libanius, *Or.* 30.44–45 (Norman 2, 140–143).

[32] Infra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 2.

[33] Libanius, *Or.* 30.8–9 (Norman 2, 106–109).

> walls overturned, images pulled down, and altars tipped over, the *priests* must keep silent or be killed. With the first temple lying in debris, there is a rush to the second and the third, and trophies are strung together with trophies in violation of the law. If these acts are ventured in the cities, they are much more common in the countryside. . . .

Libanius probably overrates the ferocity of these attacks, but apart from this his words ring true. The monks invariably recited the psalter during temple conversions, and in particular the verses that celebrated the supremacy of the God of Israel over foreign gods.[34] Secondly, and more important, Libanius affirms the survival of the rural pagan priesthoods in 386 (τοὺς ἱερεῖς δὲ ἢ σιγᾶν ἢ τεθάναι δεῖ).[35] This fills an important gap in our knowledge about continuity of cult in the Antiochene and Apamene, where the epigraphy suggests the existence of a pagan rural population well into the fifth century. For example, the dates of known temple conversions around Djebel Sim'ān are relatively late, and so it seems that the pagan priesthoods survived here until the 390's.[36]

Libanius is at pains to stress the close relationship between the Semitic temples and the productivity of the estates. He resorts once again to the anthropology he established earlier in the oration:[37]

> The temples, O emperor, are the soul of the countryside, being the true beginning of its settlement and having been passed on through many generations to the people of today. In them [reside] the hopes of the agriculturalists, those in behalf of men and women and children and cows and the earth when it is sown and planted. The stretch of country suffering this [rapine] has lost the eagerness of the farmers along with their hopes. For they reckon that they shall toil in vain if they are deprived of the gods who lead their toils for a needful purpose.

Libanius adds that a demoralized peasantry will cause the decline of the *annona* or tax in kind on agricultural production. The pious hopes of the peasantry expressed here closely resemble the petitions in behalf of animals, crops, and people that turn up in the pagan and even Christian votive inscriptions of Phrygia,[38] and are thus an authentic reflection of the farmers' attitudes in the Limestone Massif. The refusal of great landowners to Christianize their tenants for fear of reduced productivity caused by despair in the "peace of the gods" is attested even in late sixth-century Sicily.[39]

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[34] Infra, Ch. IX, Sect. 2.

[35] Libanius, *Or.* 30.8 (Norman 2, 108f.).

[36] Infra, Ch. X, Sect. 1.

[37] Libanius, *Or.* 30.9–10 (Norman 2, 108–111).

[38] Supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 2.

It is a well known paradigm that temple conversions led to brief episodes when large numbers of pagans converted to Christianity, a type of behavior contingent on the perceived impotence of the local great god to protect his shrine.[40] Libanius denies the existence of this tendency in a way that suggests a certain blindness to reality:[41]

> But if conversions could be effected by these acts of destruction, the temples would have been demolished long ago by your edict. For you would have taken a pleasurable view of this conversion long ago. But you knew you were unable. For this reason you kept hands off the temples.

Elsewhere he adds:[42]

> What indeed are they seeking? That those who honor the cult of the gods would be excluded from them and be converted to the cult of the monks? But this is all quite stupid. For who does not know that those who have suffered [persecution] feel more awe than before for the cults in which they were [engaged]?

There is some truth in the mechanism described here, which some Christian writers called the "hardened pagan mentality."[43] It turns up among the wealthy Hellenes of the middle Nile basin, the sophists of Aphrodisias who supported the rebellion of Illus in 481–488, and in Gaza after the closure of the Marneion in 402.[44] It permeated the countryside of these places as well, and also Bithynia, where a group of pagan men living in a house temple near the monastery of Rufinianae were known to attack Christians.[45] Put another way, temple conversions mostly affected men and women already wavering between the old and new religions, but had little effect on the hard core. Temple conversions were not as easily arranged as Libanius imagines. It was necessary to have a measure of local public opinion on one's side, as Marcellus of Apamea's abortive attack on the rural temples around Aulon reveals. The reasons for this are easy to see, for otherwise the monks could not have succeeded at certain acts of cynicism and insolence:[46]

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[39] This problem, which lies outside the period of the present study, is discussed in Trombley, *Survival of Paganism*, 193ff.

[40] Cf. the case of the Marneion in Gaza and the Serapeum in Alexandria. Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 3 and Ch. III, Sect. 5.

[41] Libanius, *Or.* 30.27 (Norman 2, 124f.).

[42] Libanius, *Or.* 30.26 (Norman 2, 124f.).

[43] *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.25.

[44] Supra, Ch. III, Sect. 2 and 5, and Ch. V, Sect. 4. Infra, Ch. IX, Sect. 1.

[45] Supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 1.

> They say they are making war on the temples, but this is a means of expropriating the lands around the temples, while others seize the property of the impoverished peasantry and the produce from the land they cultivate. . . . For others this does not suffice, but they usurp the land, saying it was the sacred land of some god, and many are deprived of their ancestral lands through a false title.

Libanius complains that the dispossessed pagan farmers appealed to the bishops who had jurisdiction over the monks, but in vain. Flavian of Antioch is accused of condoning these violations of property rights.[47] It is possible that some pagan villages selected Christian monks to be their patrons to forestall the less scrupulous from encroaching on their lands.[48] If so, this will have led to the Christianization of some places where superficial conversion was exchanged for protection.

Libanius knew well the dislike of Christian bishops for half-measures of this kind, and shrewdly argues that it was not in their interest to accumulate coerced converts and consequent problems with cryptopaganism:[49]

> But if they tell you that certain others have been converted by these [coercive] acts and are now of the same religious opinion as themselves, do not let it elude you that they are speaking of *seeming converts*, and not of factual ones. For they have put off nothing of their [belief], but only *say* they have. This is not to say that they honor one set of cults instead of others, but that the [Christian authorities] have been fooled. For they go with the crowds through the other places where they go for the sake of appearances, but when they assume the mien of men praying, they either call upon no one or else upon the gods, it not being proper to call upon them from such a place, but they do it all the same.

Libanius implies that forcibly converted Hellenes were using Christian churches as places of prayer to their gods.[50] He adds that only persuasion and not coercion ensure genuine conversions.[51] If the different varieties of *Ritenchristianisierung* were concessions to local cultural patterns, the Christian presbyter could not always know the mind of the rustic in his posture of prayer,[52] and this is the point of Libanius' criticism. This ambiguity was certainly present in the villages Christianized by Abraames, Thalaleios, Maro, and the other monks celebrated in Theodoret's *Historia Philotheos*. Here the author had little interest in getting past the barest phenomena of rural Christianization, but read all things on the surface, and lent an even more facile appearance to events by Atticizing his work for the adherents of the Christian sophistic.[53] It is quite possible that the persons who had "One God" inscriptions incised on their door lintels in the villages of the Limestone Massif did so to assert their "genuine conversion" (γνησία μετάνοια) *vis à vis* the threat of marauding monks. The apotropaism will thus have worked simultaneously against the *daimones* of Semitic polytheism and their enemies the Christian monks.

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[46] Libanius, *Or.* 30.11 (Norman 2, 110f.).
[47] Libanius, *Or.* 30.15 (Norman 2, 114f.).
[48] Cf. the examples of patronage to pagan villages in Ch. VIII, Sect. 2.
[49] Libanius, *Or.* 30.28 (Norman 2, 124–127).
[50] This somewhat confirms an hypothesis earlier expressed that Hellenes who visited a shrine of Kosmas and Damian, two Christian martyrs, really envisaged the Dioskouroi. Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 4.
[51] Libanius, *Or.* 30.29 (Norman 2, 126f.).

II. Monks and Christianization in Syria

The *Historia Philotheos* of Theodoret of Cyrrhus published c. 444 describes the interaction between the monks and rustic village population of Syria between c. 380–420.[54] Theodoret identifies villages by name and by distinctive geological features, unlike Callinicus of Rufinianae, who represents the pagan cults of the Anatolian countryside as a sort of amorphous phenomenon which extended over whole districts such as "inner Bithynia".[55] The corporate structure of the Syrian villages, the body of received custom, and the influence of the headmen kept many of the rustics polytheistic until the monks converted them to the new religion on a village by village basis. Many of these sites lay on old temple lands. This will have retarded Christianization inasmuch as the effigies and symbols of the old deities stood in clear view. Theodoret makes no specific references to idols in the temples, nor does he mention the names of the gods whose abodes the monks entered. Like many other Christian writers he degrades them to the status of *daimones*.

The social structure of the pagan villages of Syria emerges more clearly in Theodoret's account than in that of Callinicus of

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[52] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 4.

[53] Cf. supra, Ch. III, Sect. 4.

[54] Text: Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Histoire des moines de Syrie*, ed. tr. P. Canivet and A. Leroy-Molinghen, 2 vols. (Paris 1977–79). PG 82, 1284ff. For a discussion of the contents, see: A. Adnès and P. Canivet, "Guérisons miraculeuses et exorcismes dans l'Histoire Philothée," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 171 (1967), 53–82, 149–79.

[55] Supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 1.

Rufinianae, as do the economic processes that accompanied the mass conversion of some villages, but this is given at the expense of fuller information about their religious beliefs. This fact represents Theodoret's administrative preoccupations as bishop of Cyrrhus in Euphratensis, a town which had pagan villages in its *territorium.* The typical urban bishop, troubled with the supervision of church estates, basilica construction, and the politics and theology of the Christological controversies, will have welcomed the initiative taken by the monks in Christianizing the countryside.

The Syrian monks often sought the precincts of pagan temples for the practice of askesis, just as Daniel the Stylite had done in Thrace near Constantinople.[56] The aim of these incursions was threefold: to challenge the *daimones* of polytheism on their own turf, thereby demonstrating the power of Christ and his holy men; to convert the villages on former temple estates; and to procure building materials from the spolia of the temples for the planned basilicas and chapels that gave institutional form of Christianization. The rationale of converting rural temples differed somewhat from that of urban shrines. The civil authorities of the towns in whose *territoria* the temples lay were quite lax in policing these places, and turned a blind eye both to pagan sacrifices and to the Christian solitaries who occupied the precincts.[57] The monks then insinuated themselves into village society through cures, exorcisms, and acts of patronage in behalf of the rustics.

The earliest career cited by Theodoret is that of the monk Ammianus, who lived during the patriarchate of Flavian of Antioch (381–404). Ammianus ventured into the Limestone Massif and occupied a glen on the south side of Djebel Sheikh Berekat atop which lay the great temenos of the pagan gods (τέμενος δαιμόνων) Zeus Madbachos and Selmanes overlooking the Dana plain from the north. The *periodeutai* or travelling presbyters of the see of Antioch as well as individual monks had already been actively Christianizing the villages on the slopes surrounding the plain (which are collectively called Djebel Halaqah) for several decades.[58] Theodoret fails to mention any pagans living in the village near which Ammianus built his hut, a site called Teledan

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[56] "Vita S. Danielis Stylitae," ed. H. Delehaye, *Analecta Bollandiana* 32 (1931), 134f. The Greek text refers to the building as a *naos*, which should be taken to mean "temple" rather than "church", as it was said to be infested with *daimones*. Cf. the incorrect translation in *Three Byzantine Saints*, tr. N. Baynes and E. Dawes (1948; repr. Crestwood, N.Y. 1977), 14f.

[57] Supra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 1.

[58] Infra, Ch. X, Sect. 2.

(present-day Deir Tell-'Adeh). The epigraphy here is too scanty to give a precise date for its Christianization.[59] Perhaps Ammianus had gotten there too late to play an active role in this process. Theodoret concentrates on describing the topography of the temenos:[60]

> There is a high mountain lying to the east of Antioch, but west of Beroia. It rises above the surrounding mountains with its highest peak being of conical shape and getting its name from its height. The residents round about customarily call it Koryphe ("the peak"). There was formerly a temenos of the pagan gods on that ridge which the neighboring rustics honored greatly. To the south extended a plain shaped like a bay closed around on each side by shallow mountain glens (the Dana plain). These glens extended as far as the post road [running between Antioch and Beroia] and they have paths on either side that are cut from north to south. There are hamlets on it on either side both large and small and adjacent to the mountains on every side. On the fringe of the high mountain is the large and populous village which they call Teledan in the local dialect.

It seems clear from this description that the rustic population was well on its way to Christianization when Ammianus arrived on the scene. Theodoret seems to have inspected the site himself to judge from the detail of his description.

After he became bishop of Cyrrhus in 423, Theodoret took pains to discover what he could about the monks living in the *territorium* of his see, the so-called Cyrrhestica (ἐν τῇ Κύρου χώρᾳ). One of them was a certain Maro, who occupied an unnamed pagan "high place" between c. 406–423:[61]

> Having embraced the celestial life, Maro reached a certain mountain peak formerly honored by the impious men of old. He dedicated the temple of *daimones* upon it to God, dwelt in it, and marked out the floor plan for a small chapel.

The chapel will have been either in the cella of the temple or opposite its doorway to the east. The villages round about were in this instance still pagan. Like many other clerics and monks, Maro knew the rudiments of sacred architecture well enough to supervise the construction of a small church. The marking out of a church inside the temenos generally completed the conversion of the site to the worship of the Christian God.[62] The villagers later built a large basilica which housed the body of Maro after his death.[63] The local *panegyris* in his honor definitively replaced the remnant of polytheism that his "high place" evoked. Theodoret seems to have made a contribution from the funds of the see to this end.[64] The exact location of the temenos is unknown.[65]

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[59] Infra, Ch. X, Sect. 2.

[60] Theodoret, *Historia Philotheos* 4.2 (Canivet 1, 291ff.).

[61] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 16.2 (Canivet 2, 29ff.).

[62] Cf. the marking out of the Marneion of Gaza. Supra, Ch. III, Sect. 4, and that of Alypios the stylite's church in a pagan *nekropolis* near Hadrianopolis in

Another monk known to Theodoret was Symeon the Ancient (so-called to distinguish him from Symeon Stylites the Elder) who seems to have died before 400. He began his career by Christianizing Arabs in the eastern parts of Syria. After that, he settled somewhere in the Amanus Massif in the Cyrrestica and converted the rustics. As Theodoret puts it: "The place was formerly full of polytheist mania, but Symeon farmed it with many and various miracles and implanted the piety which is now practiced there."[66] The pre-Christian religious life of the Amanus is not well represented in the epigraphy. The votive inscription on a basalt altar at present-day Qara Tash mentions the local great god, which was either a Baal ([βήλ]ῳ) or more probably a Semitic equivalent of Helios (θεῷ μ[εγάλῳ Ἡηλί]ῳ).[67] The *horoi* or boundary stones of several independent villages, but also of estates, suggest that much of the western Amanus had been Christianized by the end of the fifth century.[68] Theodoret's report enables us to argue for a much earlier date than this for the *beginning* of the process. A boundary stone dividing the lands of the villages of Kikōnōn and Kidimoerios in the eastern Amanus has a Chi-Rho Christogram after each place-name, as if to signify "Christian villages". The markers could have been cut and emplaced anytime between about 365–490, as it seems.[69] In contrast, the *horos* stone of Charax or Charakeitōn (present-day Eshmeshek) in the eastern Amanus lacks a cross or other Christian symbol.[70] These all seem to have been independent villages of freeholders. This was probably also the case with Delphiōnos and Barochou, both of them small villages (χωρία) out-

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Paphlagonia (6th c.). F. Trombley, "Monastic Foundations in Sixth-Century Anatolia," 53–55.

[63] Multiple churches did occur in the larger villages, as for example at Brād in Djebel Sim'ān. Infra, Ch. X, Sect. 1.

[64] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 16.4 (Canivet 2, 32f.).

[65] Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *A History of the Monks of Syria*, tr. R. Price (Kalamazoo, Mich. 1985), 119, n. 2.

[66] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 6.4 (Canivet 1, 352f.).

[67] *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie III: Regions de l'Amanus. Antioche*, edd. L. Jalabert and R. Mouterde (Paris 1950), no. 743.

[68] Cf. IGLS 735, which divided the lands of the villages of Kikōnōn and Kidimoerios.

[69] IGLS 735. It was cut on the back of a stone bearing a Phoenician inscription.

[70] IGLS 740.

side Rhosos in the western Amanus whose *horói* and boundary road were demarcated by Asprenas the *scholastikos*.[71] The local economic life in the Amanus consisted partly of grain production, whose fruits the freeholders winnowed on communal threshing floors. Theodoret reports that one such facility burned down after being struck by lightning while the early summer harvest was being processed. This was said to have been a punishment due to one of the villagers' having pilfered more than his fair share of the uncut grain.[72] Symeon characterized the thunderbolt as "daimonic rage", that is the kratophany ("display of power") of one of the old Baals recategorized as a *daimon*, which will have had free rein unless the villagers practiced communal justice.[73] The monks embellished such animistic superstition elsewhere in Syria and Asia Minor.[74] A church inscription at present-day Arsous and dating from after 500 suggests that the Christianization of villages in the western Amanus went on straight through the fifth century:[75]

> Julian, who began this splendid work in part, died on the 17th of Loos in the first year of the indiction. And he was deemed worthy to be with God in his [. . . lacuna]. The beloved of God Dioskoros who completed the work [did so] by the providence of God at the behest of the most holy bishop John *in behalf of the salvation of the fruit-bearing* (*rustics*) but also in behalf of the repose of Julian the *periodeutēs*.

It will be recalled the Maro the solitary initiated the process of Christianization at a temenos by implanting a small church there. In the present case, however, it was the work of Julian the *periodeutēs*, of the class of rural presbyters who brought the new religion to isolated villages. The formula describing the first-fruit offerings of the rustics (italicized above) turns up quite commonly in Hellenic inscriptions (ἐπὶ σωτηρίας τ[ῶ]ν καρ[ποφο]ρούντων).[76] Its retention in the church inscription at Arsous indicates the Christianization of a pagan liturgy of recent memory. It is evident, then, that the *periodeutai* still had plenty of work to do in the Cyrrhestica in the later fifth century.

Another monk known to Theodoret was Abraames (ob. c. 423), who became a converter of pagans in Mount Lebanon, a great and rugged massif that lies hard against the Mediterranean coast and divides the coastal province of Phoenicia from Phoenicia Libanensis.[77] Except on the narrow coastal strip, this area was little Christianized even in the late fifth century. Abraames grew up in the Cyrrhestica and evidently learned a great deal about eradicating Semitic polytheism from the monks there. It was perhaps around 400 that he invaded "a certain large village in the Lebanon massif after learning that it was gripped by the gloom of idols."[78] Abraames was evidently bilingual and so was the village, which goes unnamed. It lay in the *territorium* of Emesa in Phoenicia Libanensis.

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[71] IGLS 734.
[72] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 6.5 (Canivet 1, 352f.).
[73] Supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 1 and 6.
[74] Supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 1, and infra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 4.
[75] IGLS 733.
[76] Supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 2, and Ch. II, Sect. 6.

Abraames is said to have employed a ruse to enter the village by disguising himself as a mat trader. After three or four days, he began to recite the psalter. This offended the pagan rustics because of the invocations of the God of Israel, lord over the gods and *daimones* of the Semites.[79] The villagers were assembled by their crier (κῆρυξ), tore off the roof of Abraames' rented house, and dumped dirt on him and his companions (θυλάκοι), who seem also to have been monks. These latter were all ordered to leave, but chance then seemingly intervened on the side of the new religion. Abraames had apparently set his arrival to coincide with the new year of the indiction. Thus, by prearrangement, tax collectors (πράκτορες) arrived on the same day as the monk revealed his identity to collect the *annona* (αἱ εἰσφοραί). After checking the store of produce and calculating the arrears, the villagers could not pay. In consequence, as Theodoret tells the story, some were tortured on the spot. At this juncture, Abraames intervened and secured a postponement of the collection for a few days in order to find guarantors for a loan of the required sum of 100 *solidi* (χρυσίνον ἑκατόν).[80]

Abraames insisted upon the villagers' acceptance of Christianity as the price of his intervention. The village had perhaps been impoverished by a poor harvest. It evidently lay on fairly high ground above the Orontes river and Beqa'a valley. If so, it had few resources to support a presbyter and small church at that time. It seems that the *periodeutai* of the see of Emesa had gotten a bad reception whenever the approached the village, and hence the need for Abraames' ruse. Abraames had to use fiscal coercion and succor in the end to achieve his aim. Such methods undoubtedly explain other conversions of villages to Christianity, but the sources are silent on this. The place was an independent village of freeholders and not on an estate, for the people are called "farmers and owners" (γεωργοὶ καὶ δεσπόται). They thus had no significant patron. As part of the scheme the villagers had to recognize Abraames as their patron or headman (ἐπιστάτης), the loan (δάνεισμα) evidently having been contracted in his name without interest. The monk delivered the tax monies to the *officium* of the Praetorian Prefecture in Emesa in due course. This done, the villagers paid their "interest" by building a church whose foundations Abraames had marked out. He stayed in the village three years thereafter, until the rustics were thoroughly catechized, and then turned over the church to another, who was probably a presbyter sent out by the see of Emesa to perform the liturgy in the new church. The place was thus formally Christianized by the implantation of a regular ecclesiastical structure.[81]

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[77] *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie VI: Baalbek et Beqa'a (Nos. 2711–3017)*, ed. J.-P. Rey Coquais (Paris 1967), cartes A and B.

[78] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 17.2 (Canivet 2, 34–37).

[79] For the contents of a typical anti-pagan recitation, see infra, Ch. IX, Sect. 2.

[80] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 17.3 (Canivet 2, 36–39). Theodoret's round figure for the taxes owed evokes suspicion.

In consequence of this success, Abraames was consecrated bishop of Carrhae-Ḥarrān (fl. c. 410–423?), a city whose large pagan population survived intact down to the Arab conquest in the mid-seventh century. This assignment required a tough manipulator of religious opinion. He evidently made a fair number of conversions there, although Theodoret certainly exaggerates:[82]

> This city was clad in the drunkenness of impiety, and had given itself to the frenzy of the pagan gods. But being deemed worthy of his agriculture, and having received the fire of his (Abraames') teaching, [the city] stayed free of the earlier weeds.

In cities where Christianization lagged, manpower had at times to be drawn from the countryside. At Carrhae-Ḥarrān, at least, the Semitic cults were too deeply entrenched to permit a single Christian bishop to overthrow them in the manner of Porphyrius of Gaza. The eventual decline of these cults is variously reported by Jacob of Sarug (ob. 521) and Nonnus of Nisibis.[83]

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[81] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 17.4 (Canivet 2, 38–41).

[82] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 17.5 (Canivet 2, 40f.). Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World" 346. Rochow, "Oppositionelle religöse Strömungen" 233–236. Ḥarrān was perhaps at a relatively early stage of Christianization even in the mid-sixth century, to judge from an Arabic inscription of 568 A.D.: "I, Sharahil son of Zalina, built this *martyrion* in the year 463 (of the local era), one year after the destruction of Khaibar." *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe*, ed. J. Sauvaget *et alii* 1 (Cairo 1931), no. 3. The donor belonged probably to the first Christian generation to judge from his name.

[83] J.P. Martin, "Discours de Jacques de Sarroug sur la chute des idoles,"

There is little doubt that Theodoret's observations are sound. Yet the question remains: how typical of conditions in Mount Lebanon and the Emesene was Abraames' experience? The epigraphy strongly corroborates a relatively late date for the Christianization of the villages of this district.

As broadly defined by the editors of *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*, the Emesene consists of the stretch of country running along the middle and upper course of the Orontes river that lies between Epiphaneia in the north and Maurikiopolis in the south. The only considerable cities along this route are Emesa itself, Arethusa, and Laodicea ad Libanum.[84] These towns were Christianized along normal lines during the fourth and fifth centuries, but the countryside appears to have lagged behind other parts of Syria, and particularly the Antiochene, in accepting the new religion.[85] The more northerly sites along the Orontes will be considered first, and then those to the west and south. Inscriptions useful for charting the Christianization of villages are sparse in comparison to their great proliferation in northern Syria and the Hauran district in Arabia.[86] The relative shortage of dated texts creates a considerable margin for error, but it can safely be said that few signs of the new religion appear in the rural Emesene until the sixth century. The few inscriptions of an earlier date suggest the complete absence of its institutional presence.

Let us first consider the northern villages of the Emesene. At Krād ad-Dāsiniya, a lintel dated to 346/7 lacks a cross.[87] Christianity first turns up in a sarkophagos inscription that mentions the presbyter and archimandrite Samuel with several companions and artisans.[88] It belongs in the sixth century, along with another Christian inscription from probably 529.[89] Nearby Tisnin accepted the new religion sometime after 390, but we cannot say when. Here a lintel without a cross indicates: "Tib(erios?) Zenon (?) set this in place" 390 A.D.).[90] These personal names are not distinctively Christian. A later undated lintel inscription advertises the radical

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Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 29 (1876), 107–47. Nonnus of Nisibis, *Traité apologétique*, ed. A. van Roey (Louvain 1948), XXI.58*.

[84] IGLS V and VII, maps at end of volumes.

[85] For the Christianization of the Antiochene, see infra, Ch. X, Sect. 1–5.

[86] The criteria for assessing the value of the epigraphic evidence are more fully established infra, Ch. X.

[87] *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie V: Émésène (Nos. 1998–2710)*, edd. L. Jalabert, R. Mouterde, C. Mondésert (Paris 1959), no. 2142.

[88] IGLS 2143.

[89] IGLS 2144.

[90] IGLS 2130.

monotheism of the householder with "(Cross) One God and Christ (Cross)."[91] Tisnin lies closer to the Orontes river than the previous site, and so perhaps accepted the new religion at an earlier date than 500.

In the same area there is the site tentatively identified as the ancient Garion. Its epigraphic record is rather more complete and indicates a preoccupation with the early stages of Christianization. First, as regards the remnants of the old religion, there is a pre-Christian funerary stele with the crude portrait of Bernike daughter of Silvanus (290/1 A.D.) and another undated one having the portrait of the man Maros son of Mozaios with a wreath in his hand. Both contain the same formula: "Hail to you, who died an untimely death" (ἄωρε χαῖρε).[92] Garion's pagan nekropolis was still in use in 423, as we learn from a sarkophagos that was completed at the time of the new moon in the month Dios (μηνὸς Δίος νεομηνίᾳ ἐτελιώθη).[93] The mention of a pagan religious festival and the absence of a cross make it a pagan burial. All this began to change, it appears, between c. 490–510. One badly damaged house stone has been plausibly identified as belonging to a baptistry. It is badly damaged but legible: "[The bapt]isterion was compl[eted by the] chorep[iskopos N]oumen[ios]." The square letter forms suggest a date after 500 (ΕΛШΡΥΜ⊏), but the omicron-upsilon ligature commonly employed at that time was not used.[94] The institutional presence of Christianity at Garion began with the catechization of the rustics by the chorepiskopos and the construction of the sort of building most urgently needed, a place to carry out the baptism of the people of Garion and probably of other sites in the vicinity. An undated house stone records a similar theme: "(Cross) The Lord is [my] illum[ination and the bodyguard] of [my] life (Cross)."[95] The word chosen for "illumination" (φωτισ[μός]) often takes the sense of "baptism". The dated inscriptions at Garion, from 519/20, 524/5, and 566/7, are enlightening to the extent of showing that the village had been Christianized well before the Justinianic program came into force.[96] The earliest exclaims: "(Cross) Christ, it was completed in your name." An undated victory formula seemingly turns up on a loose stone: "The faith of the Christians conquers" (ν(ικ)ᾷ (ἡ) π(ίστις) [χ(ριστιανῶν)?]).[97] We should not err in putting the arrival of the new religion at Garion no later than the first decade of the sixth century.

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[91] IGLS 2131.
[92] IGLS 2165, 2166.
[93] IGLS 2167.
[94] IGLS 2159.
[95] IGLS 2158.
[96] IGLS 2154–2156.

There is a fourth village in the parts northwest of Emesa, Burdj el-Qāʿi, whose name and inscriptions suggest that it was a veterans' settlement in the third century A.D.[98] Latin names predominated at that time.[99] The only known local deity was Mistress Semea, who turns up in the inscriptions of northern Syria as well. The Council of Six of Burdj el-Qāʿi supervised the construction of a temple dedicated to her in 196/7 A.D. (τῇ κυρίᾳ Σημέᾳ . . . οἱ ἓξ τὸν ναὸν ἐποίησαν).[100] The first known Christian tomb was built in 457,[101] but a house lintel without a cross turns up in 531/2[102] amidst many Christian inscriptions of similar date.[103] A church building or martyrion was in existence by 539/40. It was erected from the funds of the bishop Peter through the *oikonomoi* and presbyters Isaiah and Leontius. These latter were not posted to the village, but were rather the episcopal officials who supervised the construction work. A *prosmonarios* seems to have staffed this local facility.[104] In light of this evidence, it is difficult to suppose the existence of a regular church structure at Burdj el-Qāʿi in the first half of the sixth century. Possibly the Christians of this village were attended to by the same *chorepiskopos* who visited Garion in the early sixth century. There were both pagans and Christians in Burdj el-Qāʿi between 457 and 531/2.

There are two villages to the north of Arethusa on the Orontes river, Deir el-Ferdīs and Kfar Buhūm. Neither of these was certifiably Christian until the 540's.[105]

The villages of the southwestern Emesene lying around the Lake of Emesa seem generally to have become Christian in the second half of the fifth century. They lie generally on the plain as it approaches the northeastern foothills of Mt. Lebanon. The monk Abraames probably passed through this area on his way to the large village that he Christianized, and so Theodoret's assertion that the rustics of this area were still pagan after 400 is entirely plausible.

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[97] IGLS 2168.

[98] Cf. the *nekropolis* stele: "G. Fullonius Severus the veteran." IGLS 2096, 2097.

[99] Cf. the funerary stele of 214 A.D. of G. Maximus, son of Dometianus. IGLS 2095.

[100] IGLS 2089.

[101] IGLS 2090.

[102] IGLS 2093.

[103] IGLS 2091 (door lintel, 528/9 A.D.), 2092 (door, 530/1).

[104] The inscription is broken here (εὐλα[β. παραμον]αρίου). IGLS 2098.

[105] *IGLS* 2070, 2071, 2079 (Deir el-Ferdis, and 2064, 2065 (Kfer Buhūm).

Of these sites, Liftaya contains the most revealing inscriptions, most of them on lintel stones. The householder Palladis attested in 449/50 was doubtless a pagan, as his or her lintel bears no cross.[106] The moment of Christianization was probably the early 460's, when lintels both with and without crosses turn up almost simultaneously.[107] These are the first signs of a process that reached fruition in the first decade of the sixth century, when lintels with crosses turn up in large numbers, four of them for the years 508–510, which is a remarkable concentration of dates for such scattered evidence.[108] It was perhaps at this time that a village church was constructed and the presbyter John installed in it.[109] Inscriptions signifying recent conversions may belong to this crucial time as well, one of them "This (cross) conquers" (τοῦτο + νικᾷ), the other "One God".[110] Liftaya has three Christian inscriptions from the mid-sixth century. To sum up the course of events, some villagers began to accept the new religion c. 461–464, but Liftaya did not become culturally and institutionally Christian until c. 508–510.

Less can be said of the other villages in the southern Emesene. The first Christian inscriptions turn up at Qizz el-Akher in 479/80, at Tairin in 480/1,[111] and at Harba'āra in 480/1.[112] These rather remarkable synchronisms are discussed below. The last-named site received its first church only in 547/8, its dedication being recorded by a Syriac inscription. By contrast, the latest pagan inscription at Maurikiopolis Gausithōn was cut in 425 on a stele with the bust of a woman.[113] It seems that all these places had Christians in them, but that shortages of personnel left them marginally Christianized until as late as 550. This can be deduced in part from the onomastics. For example, at Djubbaniyeh, a Christian funerary stele was erected for a man called Astros Kastēs son of Addas.[114] He quite obviously belonged to the first generation of converts in his family with this concatenation of Hellenic and Semitic names.[115] The outward forms of the old culture thus persisted after the conversions of the 480's. At Kneysseh, a sarkophagos dated 258/9 A.D.

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[106] IGLS 2641.

[107] IGLS 2642, 2643.

[108] IGLS 2629, 2634, 2636, 2639.

[109] IGLS 2649.

[110] IGLS 2645, 2647.

[111] IGLS 2623, 2180.

[112] IGLS 2650.

[113] IGLS 2693.

[114] IGLS 2659.

[115] The Christian-Jewish name Daniel turns up in an inscription of 552/3, IGLS 2653.

was taken from the pagan nekropolis and reused in later time by Christians, who took care to inscribe the various formulae of the new religion, including: "(Cross) It conquers. . . ." (+ νικᾷ, etc.).[116]

The critical period for the Christianization of the southern Emesene came much later than in northern Syria. It seems likely that the bishop of Emesa sent out monks or *chorepiskopoi* in considerable numbers between 460–480 and that many conversions took place, as the first Christian inscriptions of several villages turn up at that time. For financial reasons, however, the new congregations were not put on a secure footing until between 500–550, when churches and presbyters turn up in the epigraphy. It seems quite clear that all the effort went into Christianizing the large village that is present-day Liftaya (between c. 460–510). Thus, Abraames, one of the heroes of Theodoret's narrative, was truly a pioneer when he entered this area to preach the new religion in the early fifth century. The case of Liftaya suggests, on the other hand, that a policy of energetic Christianization existed in the southern Emesene from the time of emperor Anastasius I onward (491–518). Once again the so-called "Justinianic" methods are shown to have had a prior origin.

Abraames the monk ended up somewhere in Mt. Lebanon after traversing the southern Emesene. It remains to examine religious conditions in the massif proper. The Christianization of the eastern slopes of Mt. Lebanon was dominated by the fact that the polytheistic cults of Baalbek-Heliopolis died out rather slowly. The great temple in that city was closed during the reign of Theodosius the Great (379–395), an act entailing the demolition of two great altars in the temple courtyard. The larger of the two was a magnificent affair, having four stories above the ground level with several stairways.[117] A Christian basilica replaced these edifices. A smaller temple nearby did, however, remain intact of perhaps even in use thereafter.[118] The Christians here were an economically weak and politically disadvantaged group which did not break the grip of the pagans in the urban magistracies until 579/80, when an imperial official named Theophilus arrived, made arrests, and performed some executions.[119] The end of the religious conflict at

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[116] IGLS 2179.

[117] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 2. Deichmann, "Kirchen in Heiligtümern" 115f. Cf. Paul Collart and Pierre Coupel, *L'autel monumental de Baalbek* (Paris 1951).

[118] Deichmann, "Kirchen in Heiligtümern," 116.

[119] John of Ephesus, HE 3.27 (versio p. 114). Trombley, "Religious Transition in Syria" Sect. 2.

Baalbek was celebrated by an undated Christian victory inscription: "(Cross) Christ conquers in this sign" (Χριστὸς τούτῳ + νικᾷ).[120] It can hardly be doubted that there were numerous pagans among the freeholders and tenant farmers on the eastern slopes of Mt. Lebanon where it descends into the Beqa'a valley. The epigraphy bears this out in dramatic fashion.

The largest village along the eastern slope of the Lebanon massif was the ancient Nihata (present-day Niha in the upper Litani valley). Three temples have been discovered there.[121] A sculpture of Zeus Heliopolitanus cut in high relief and Semitic style survives, as does an altar with various dedications on it.[122] The only dated Christian inscription at Nihata, a basalt lintel, mentions the laying of a church mosaic floor in 539. Three or four *oikonomoi*, all of them deacons, supervised the work at the behest of the bishop Michael.[123] The absence of presbyters is peculiar. There is no reason to suppose that Nihata had any Christians in it before this time or for that matter that a particularly large congregation existed thereafter. It is difficult to say whether Michael held the see of Baalbek-Heliopolis or Chalkis ad Libanum, but the Christianization of Nihata clearly belongs to the Justinianic period.

Self-conscious polytheists seem to have lived in the village of Boudai to the northwest of Baalbek in the same year. An inscription records:[124]

> Magnus, son of Anēs Iēssaa, completed the cistern on the day of the Moon at the third indiction in the year 850. The gods.

The Seleucid date given here equals 539 A.D. The editor expresses some doubt about the readings ("Lecture tres douteuse, et restitutions plus incertaines encore"). The religious meaning hinges on Rey-Coquais' restoration of the last two words, "the gods" (οἱ θ(εοί)). As will be seen below, neither this reading nor the date have anything against them if rightly understood in the Beqa'a valley context. Latin personal names are relatively common in all parts of Syria and Arabia under the late empire.[125] It is certain that some families at least sought to distinguish themselves from the prevalent Christian-Hebraic nomenclature by holding onto rather archaic sounding Latin and Semitic names like these. The date and onomastics are thus consistent with a reading like "the gods". Who these gods were is possibly answered by a votive offering found at Yammouneh some 25 kilometers northwest of Baalbek, another site on the eastern slope of Mt. Lebanon having a temple. The inscription runs: "Julianus son of Julianus, sculptor, (made this) with his own hands, to the god Eresem Op." (τῷ θεῷ Ερεσεμ Ω[π]),[126] a divine name deserving fuller study.

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[120] IGLS 2835.

[121] Daniel Krencker and Willy Zschietzschmann, *Römische Tempel in Syrien* (Berlin-Leipzig 1938), 105–116, 118f.

[122] IGLS 2939.

[123] IGLS 2945.

[124] IGLS 2915.

[125] Infra, Ch. X and XI passim.

Any compunctions about the readings of the Boudai inscription are obviated by another from the site of Mu'allaqat-Zakhleh west of Nihata. The village has no dated Christian inscriptions, but there is one text on a pagan altar:[127] "In the year 851 on the fifth day of the month of Dystos. Borkeos and Sabas brothers." The date corresponds to 540 A.D. The familiar, culturally resistant, non-Christian names are present once again. The style of the monument is late and consistent with the date given.[128] Offerings of incense and probably animal sacrifice still engaged the polytheists of Mt. Lebanon, therefore, in the mid-sixth century. This conclusion is ineluctable and fully consistent with John of Ephesus' report about the pagan trials of 579/80 at Baalbek.[129] This altar bears the latest known pagan cultic inscription of the Eastern Roman Empire, and speaks worlds for other nameless rustics of the Lebanon massif who have left no trace behind. The most striking feature of the altar is its temporal context, for Borkeos and Sabas felt capable of making a public display of their cult in a time of anti-Hellenic repression. Justinian's ultimate failure to come to grips with the Hellenes of Baalbek affected the countryside in turn, whose serious Christianization must have been deferred through the late sixth century. It seems certain that Mu'allaqat-Zakhleh lay in the *territorium* of Chalkis ad Libanum. The city was perhaps dominated by Baalbek in matters of religion, just as the pagan city councillors reigned supreme in Baalbek itself.

One must nevertheless exercise caution in generalizing, as a look at two villages in the Beqa'a valley proper reveals. At Dakoueh, a village lying on the Litani river quite close to Chalkis ad Libanum, the tomb of the pagan Nikeos (τόπος Νικέου) was reused by the Christian deacon Silōn at an apparently early date, 313/4 A.D.[130]

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[126] IGLS 2916.
[127] IGLS 2962.
[128] IGLS VII, Plate XLVI (3 photos).
[129] Supra, Ch. VIII n. 119.
[130] IGLS 2985.

The reading of the date 625 in the Seleucid era is absolutely certain, but strikes the editor Rey-Coquais as too early. The square uncial letters of the script seem to belong to a later time (Ε,⊟,Ш), perhaps c. 380–420, when they became a passing fashion.[131] The editor posits the use here of some Hellenistic era like that of Sidon or Berytus, but this seems impossible in view of Dakoueh's close proximity to Chalkis. A suggestion more consistent with the letter forms would be that the stonecutter mistakenly incised Chi (=600) instead of Psi (=700) in recording the date because of some difficulty with his sketch, for little of the inscription makes grammatical sense.[132] This would yield a date of 413/4 A.D.[133]

If this view is accepted, then it seems that the bottomlands of the Beqa'a valley were being Christianized in the early fifth century, a periodization consistent with other parts of Syria such as the Apamene. Some support for this chronology turns up at Serin, a village in the eastern Beqa'a not far from Baalbek. The site perhaps had the temple of a female fertility deity in earlier time, for its name derives from the Semitic Serr el-'Ain, "the mystery of the source." A pagan tomb previously owned by Boukeros son of Bourkeos (its first proprietor) and Maximus (the second proprietor) was reused for a Christian burial in 457/8.[134] The person interred this time was the lady Dioclia (τῆς κυρᾶς Δ[ιο]κλίας). The Evagrios Ioannes who erected the monument was evidently her husband. These folk were perhaps prosperous free farmers or estate owners residing in the countryside, much like the church historian Sozomen's ancestors. The displacement of the tomb's pagan owners with their Latin and Semitic names by Christians with Hebraic-Hellenic names is consistent with the pattern discernible elsewhere.

To return to Abraames and his companions once again, it seems that they trekked up Mt. Lebanon because it offered a real challenge to their ascetic tenacity. In contrast to the uplands of the massif, the Beqa'a valley was simply too tame a spot to engage them, being perhaps partly Christian already in the first decade of the fifth century. It is quite evident that the Christianization of one village in Mt. Lebanon could not offset the polytheism of those in the Beqa'a valley inside the *territorium* of Baalbek. This evidence, when combined with that of the southern Emesene, bears out the commonly expressed view that mountainous areas tended to be Christianized later, but the unique character of Baalbek is partly responsible for this phenomenon in the local context.

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[131] Infra, Ch. X passim.

[132] Rey Coquais, the editor, does not give a full transcription.

[133] Earlier dates of Christianization are not out of the question, as for example the tomb inscription of Silon the deacon at Dakoueh in the south Beqa'a valley (313 A.D.). IGLS 2985.

[134] IGLS 2974.

It is necessary to look into one other area before concluding the discussion of Abraames' venture into Mt. Lebanon. That area is the southern tip of the Nosairi mountains which run southward along the Syrian coast from the mouth of the Orontes river to Arados. A great temenos lay in the southern Nosairi at a site called Baitochichi (present-day Ḥosn Soleiman). The "great holy god" of the place derived his name from the toponym ([θεῷ] ἁγίῳ [ἐπη]κόῳ Βα[ιτοχιχι]).[135] He was the local Baal, a "hearkening" deity (ἐπήκοος) of the lower air who hurled thunderbolts (κεραύνιος)[136] and presided over the movement of rain clouds. A camel sacrifice to him is recorded on a bronze tablet from the site.[137] The last dated votive offering to him is dated 257 A.D. (from the era of Arados),[138] but the cult probably lasted another two centuries to judge from the regional context. The remains of the temple are considerable and quite impressive.[139]

Neither the literary sources nor the archaeology suggest a temple conversion. Christianity grew up, rather, on the fringes of the temenos at different sites over time. At Hebbeh near Saita, an inscription mentions a sacrifice "upon the sacred altar of Baal in behalf of the salvation of Pyrrhus and Kastor and Publius" (ἐν ἱερῷ βωμῷ Βήλου ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας Πύρρου καὶ Κάστορος καὶ Ποπλίου). It is undated and earlier than the fifth century, and gives the more common name of the Theos Megistos Baitochichi, whose adherents characteristically have the older Hellenic and Latin names.[140]

For reasons difficult to explain, monotheism penetrated the village of Juweikat near Baitochichi at a very early date, in 287/8 A.D. The inscription stands on a basalt lintel and reads: "One God only (εἷς Θεὸς μόνος). Aurelius Demetris made (this) in the year 599. . . ."[141] It is the earliest "One God" inscription, unless we suppose that the editors have gotten the era wrong and that Juweikat used the era of Arados rather than the Seleucid era. In that case the year would be 390 A.D.[142] The praenomen Aurelius is much more likely in the third century A.D., but not impossible through the late fourth. A monotheistic inscription is quite early for this region at either date. The inscription bears no cross, but the name of the dedicand suggests conversion to Christianity rather than Judaism. The Christian formula incised on the stone (Alpha-Chi-Rho-Omega) was added later, certainly after the sole rule of Constantine the Great began in the Roman East in 324.[143]

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[135] *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie VII: Arados et régions voisines (Nos. 4001-4061)*, ed. J.-P. Rey Coquais (Paris 1970), nos. 4033, 4038, 4041, etc.

[136] IGLS 4041.

[137] IGLS 4041.

[138] IGLS 4033.

[139] IGLS VII, Pl. IX-XIII.

[140] IGLS 4049.

[141] IGLS 4042. Peterson, *EIC ΘEOC*, 23f.

There was a temple conversion at the village of Saisaniyeh near Saita probably in the early fifth century. A church was built inside the enclosure of a small temple (not that of the larger one of Zeus-Baal).[144] The church lintel inscription is quite revealing about the local religious psychology:[145]

> Jesus Christ the son of God dwells here. Nothing evil shall enter!
> (Alpha)(Cross)(Omega) Iordanes. (Cross) Help!

Jordanes' words suggest a pervasive fear of the daimonic powers of the old Baal thought to dwell in the larger temple. One could be safe from its kratophanies like thunderbolts inside the Christian church where no evil thing might enter ([μ]ηδὲν ἐσίτω κακόν). Iordanes' title is not given. He perhaps served as the *prosmonarios* of the Christian shrine. He and a small congregation possibly feared the experience of daimonic kratophanies like those that Thalaleios the stylite was said to have endured in a temenos near Gabala some 60 kilometers up the coast, hence the invocation: "Help!" (βοήθι). Iordanes may well have been a near contemporary of Abraames, but chose to confront the pagan gods in their shrines rather than their adherents in the villages of the southern Nosairi.

Gabala lay along the coastal plain well to the west of the central Nosairi. Although a relatively small city, its *territorium* probably extended up the western face of the mountain chain. It was here that Thalaleios, another of Theodoret's heroic converters of pagans, invaded a "high place" on a hill where lay a temenos of Semitic polytheism (fl. ante 423).[146] The site of the temple and martyrion has not been discovered.[147] Theodoret dramatizes the kratophany of the local Baal, which was thought to resist the intrusion of the Christian holy man into its sacred space:[148]

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[142] As in IGLS 4033.

[143] IGLS 4042 bis.

[144] Krencker-Zschietzschmann, *Römische Tempel in Syrien* 101. For the site in general, pp. 65–101.

[145] IGLS 4050.

[146] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 18 (Canivet 2, 224ff.).

[147] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 18.1 (Canivet 2, 225, n. 2.).

> Thalaleios marked out a small hut for himself upon reaching a certain hill on which there was a temple reserved to the pagan gods and formerly honored by impious men with many sacrifices. It was about twenty *stadia* from Gabala (this city is small but splendid). They say that the [rustics] served the wretched [deities] with much savagery, attempting to soothe them with sacrifices. For the *daimones* destroy many persons, both those nearby and also their neighbors, not only men but also mules and asses and cattle and sheep. The *daimones* do not make war on animals, but plot against men through them. Then, when they saw this man Thalaleios arrive, they attempted to strike, but were unable [to effect anything] because his faith fortified him and grace protected him. Being struck by madness and rage, they rushed against the trees growing there, and many fig and olive trees on that hill were weakened. They say that more than five hundred of them were torn down. I heard this from the neighboring farmers who tell the story. These folk formerly embraced the gloom of impiety, but received a knowledge of God through the teaching and miraculous acts of that man.

The damage to the orchards, which made up a sacred grove, evidently came from a freak storm with gale-force winds. The Baal was thought to have contrived this, but Thalaleios' obduracy proved to be the beginning of Christianization. This is the only occasion on which Theodoret mentions sacrifice in the *Historia Philotheos*. They were thought in the local context to "sooth" (ἐθεράπευον) the alienated gods of the soil and sky. Thalaleios is also said to have witnessed their epiphanies through bright lights and screams in the night. It is difficult to say whether these were phenomena of the mind or of human provenance through the obdurate polytheists of the nearby villages who feared the lapse of the peace of the gods.[149] Thalaleios seems to have blessed and cured the rustics' domesticated animals as a sign of the power of the Christian God, much as Hypatius of Rufinianae did in Bithynia.[150]

As a native of Cilicia, Thalaleios did not know the Aramaic dialect spoken in the hinterland of Gabala. He compensated for this through extreme forms of askesis. He ensured the victory over the pagan gods of the temenos by erecting a cramped wooden cage for himself. Theodoret describes the carpentry and adds: "[The cage] had a height of two cubits inside. Thalaleios spent ten years sitting in it, or rather hanging. Since he had a large body, he was unable to sit with his neck straight. Rather, he always sat bent forward having his knees nailed to his face."[151] If words were insufficient to convert the rustics, perhaps actions might. As in other places, a martyrion arose amidst the ruins of the temenos:[152]

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[148] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 18.1 (Canivet 2, 224–27).

[149] On the physiological origins of luminous phenomena experienced in states of sleep and partial wakefulness, cf. Carl Jung, *On the Psychology and Pathology of So-called Occult Phenomena* (Leipzig 1902) in *Psychology and the Occult* (London 1987), 61–63. Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 18.2 (Canivet 2, 226f.).

[150] Supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 1.

> I went to him and found him collecting the profit of the divine gospels. I asked, desiring to discover the cause of that novel life-style. He answered in Greek, for he was a Cilician by race. . . . The dwellers round about relate that many miracles are effected through his prayer not only in behalf of men but also on camels and mules and donkeys which enjoy his cures. The entire population of that place was gripped by impiety, but despised ancestral folly and received the radiance of the divine light. By making use of these services, he abolished the temenos of the pagan gods (*daimones*) and raised a great precinct to the splendidly victorious martyrs, substituting the divine dead for the falsely named gods.

The prayer of the holy man and martyr relics completed the conversion of the site, just as they did at the octagonal martyrion at 'Ezra in the Ledjā in the Provincia Arabia.[153] Many of Theodoret's phrases here are echoed in his *Therapeutic for Hellenic Maladies*, where he again celebrates the triumph of the splendidly victorious (καλλίνικοι) martyrs:[154]

> They have obliterated the memory of the so-called gods from the mind of men. For their temples have been utterly destroyed, so that no trace of their configurations survives, nor do men now set up the replica of their altars. Rather, their material remnants are sanctified by the shrines of martyrs. For the master [Christ] has introduced his own dead in substitution for your gods. . . . For instead of the Pandia and Diasia and Dionysia and your other festivals, there are now celebrated the public festivals of Peter, Paul, Thomas, Sergius, Marcellus, Leontius, Antoninus, Maurice, and the other martyrs. And instead of the ancient processions and obscene acts and words, moderate festivals are celebrated, not having drunkenness, merrymaking, and laughter, but divine hymns and the recitation of sacred texts, and prayer ornamented with praiseworthy tears.

This victory was celebrated in other parts of the Syrian countryside, wherever the monks overturned the temples of polytheism.

The endemic exploitation of agricultural labor by the landed magnates sitting in the city councils gave the monks another avenue of attack on the old religion through the *coloni* and tenant farmers. This lies behind the activity of monks like Maisymas (fl. ante 423?) who operated in the Cyrrhestica on the estates of Letoios, a well-known Antiochene city councillor.[155] Letoios remained a Hellene and was known in Libanius' cirle. Like other great landowners pagan and Christian alike, he exacted too great a share of rent from his tenants (σφοδρότερον ἤ ἔδει τοὺς γηπόνους εἰσπράττεσθαι τοὺς καρπούς) whom Theodoret calls "workers on the land" (οἱ γηπόνοι) to distinguish them from the freeholders (γεωργοὶ καὶ δεσπόται) mentioned in his account of Abraames. If Christian landowners neglected the Christianization of their tenant farmers,[156] men like Letoios will have positively discouraged it. Even patriarch Flavian of Antioch (381–404), known from Libanius' oration "In Behalf of the Temples" for overlooking monastic raids on ex-temple lands, knew, as a landowner himself, the plausible limits of interference with other men's property. It therefore fell to monks like Maisymas, a native speaker of the local Aramaic dialect, to penetrate the estates of the Hellenes, win adherents to the new religion, and appeal to the landlords' sense of humanity. All this created many new Christians, but did little to alter rural social and economic relations. Even so, there were minor triumphs when the holy man asserted his mastery over the peasantry to the disadvantage of the wealthy.

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[151] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 18.3 (Canivet 2, 226–29).
[152] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 18.4 (Canivet 2, 228–31).
[153] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 1. Infra, Ch. XI, Sect. 3.
[154] Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Therapeutic* 8.68–69 (Canivet 2, 334f.).

A seemingly trivial incident mentioned in Theodoret's *Historia Philotheos* ties in with these realities. It is said that Letoios used to inspect his estates by riding about in a splendidly appointed mule-drawn waggon or chariot. When it got stuck on one occasion, it is said, the rustics were unable to dislodge its wheels with rods and levers. The rustic most friendly to Letoios, who was perhaps his bailiff, then advised him to send for Maisymas, who demanded that the Hellene prostrate himself before him and embrace his rags. Notwithstanding Theodoret's implicit denial, it seems quite probable that the monk had incited a common form of rural noncooperation. The tenant farmers could hardly go on strike when it came to agricultural production, as their own subsistence depended on this directly. They could, however, perform corvees along with the other non-agricultural and extra-legal tasks required of them—including the dislodgement of Letoios' mired vehicle—without enthusiasm or even with gross incompetence in order to make an issue of their grievances. Letoios' bailiff, as it seems, knew this much, that Maisymas had influence great enough to overcome the peasants' sullen behavior. He effected this without church buildings or the *chorepiskopoi* of Cyrrhus behind him. As a rustic himself, Maisymas was probably born of a family that had suffered its share of exploitation, and personal loyalty coupled with shared economic hardship will have earned him many converts. The typical solitary was no great economic burden, surviving as he did on less nourishment than the most impoverished renter. The difference was that the monk could raise his voice in defiance with impunity, because anyone who harmed him risked the rebellion of an exploited peasantry led by the archimandrites and solitaries, a rebellion that might in time come to the attention of the "most Christian" emperor. Even if one rejects the historicity of Theodoret's statement that Letoios made the *proskynesis* to Maisymas, there is a strong element of truth in the social and economic mechanisms that Theodoret describes.

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[155] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 14 (Canivet 2, 9ff.).
[156] Supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 1.

The accumulated evidence suggests, then, that the countryside of early fifth-century Syria was in many places hardly Christianized. The sample of pagan villages given by Theodoret is geographically diverse: Teledan in the Limestone Massif between Antioch and Beroia, the slopes of Mts. Amanus and Lebanon, the *territorium* of Gabala on the western face of the Nosairi mountains, and the estates of the Hellene Letoios in the Cyrrhestica. The list is not exhaustive: it represents only the sites where monks known to Theodoret resided. Nor was the terrain described always difficult of access in the craggy mountains, although the urban sees must surely have neglected such localities. The epigraphy demonstrates the existence of other such communities that resisted the coming of the new religion well into the sixth century.

One other of Theodoret's narratives requires analysis, that pertaining to Symeon Stylites the Elder's purported conversion of pagan Arabs who approached his stele at Qalat Sim'ān. Ramsay MacMullen's remarks thereon make additional comment obligatory.[157] The site, midway between Antioch and Beroia, lay in the heart of the bilingual Greek and Aramaic speaking areas that comprised the *Landschaft* of Theodoret's *Historia Philotheos*. Symeon was, however, a famous monk around whom a Mediterranean-wide cult had accumulated. Theodoret observes:[158]

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[157] Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire (A.D. 100–400)* (New Haven 1984), 1–3.

[158] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 26.11 (Canivet 2, 180–83).

> Thus, with every kind of person arriving from every conceivable place and every road becoming like a river, a sea of men was seen standing together in that place receiving rivers from every direction. Not only did those who lived in our *oikoumene* accumulate, but also Arabs and Persians, the Armenians subject to the latter (Persarmenians), Iberians, Himyarites, and others. Many arrived who live in the farthest parts of the West, including Spaniards, Britons, and the Kelts who live amidst them, and from Italy, too, it is superfluous to say. For in the Greater Rome the man is so well known that in all the vestibules of the workshops the [artisans] set up small images to him in order to provide protection and security for themselves.

The events at Djebel Sim'ān were an extraordinary phenomenon when compared with the more prosaic activities of the solitary monks in the Syrian countryside, for whom the sincere conversion of a pagan village might constitute a life's work. Furthermore, the common rural economic background and Aramaic linguistic ties between catechist and polytheist, vital factors in the *permanent* Christianization of the countryside, were absent at Symeon's stele. A seemingly different ethos prevailed here, where a polyglot religious tourism resulted in a veritable babel, in which the *linguae francae* must uniformly have been Greek and Aramaic.[159] The conversions reported, particularly those of the Arabs, must therefore be regarded in a different light from what has been seen thus far of Bithynia and northern Syria. In other words, the text chosen by Ramsay MacMullen to introduce his discussion in *Christianizing the Roman Empire* relects phenomena entirely atypical to the real, but seldom so dramatically told, story of the conversion of villages that often took as many as three years to effect. The example of Symeon on his stele thus fails for the purpose of generalization. MacMullen's question formulated in light of this, to wit, whether these folk "had really joined the church", is probably to be answered in the affirmative, as they had probably become members of the catechumenate. The mechanics of this process will become evident when we turn to the mission of St. Euthymius.[160]

To return to Theodoret's account: many diverse foreigners resorting to the shrine were pagan, "being sick with unbelief" (τῶν τὴν ἀπιστίαν νοσούντων),[161] among them many Arabs:[162]

> [Symeon's] standing on the column causes the baptism of the Ismaelites, many myriads of them enslaved by the gloom of unbelief.

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[159] Infra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 4, where the Syriac biographers of Symeon suggest strong Aramaic and Arabic cultural roots for his methods and religiosity.

[160] Infra, this section.

[161] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 26.12 (Canivet 2, 190f.).

[162] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 16.13 (Canivet 2, 190f.).

> For just as when the brightest of lamps is set on a lampstand, it sends out rays everywhere of the equivalent intensity of the sun. One can see Iberians, Armenians, and Persians coming to enjoy the divine baptism. The Ishmaelites arrive in clan groups, 200 in one, 300 [in another], at times 1000 strong, and scorn their parental error with a shout, smashing the idols they revere in front of that great light-bearer [Symeon]. They put aside the orgies of Aphrodite (for until that time they had accepted the worship of that pagan god), and enjoyed the divine mysteries. Having received laws from that sacred tongue and having spoken farewell to their ancestral customs, they despised the meat of wild asses and camels.

Theodoret was present at one of these assemblies and was nearly trampled in the stampede to approach the stele:[163]

> I was an eyewitness to these events and heard [the Arabs] when they put aside their ancestral impiety and assented to the evangelical teaching. There remained one very great peril. He ordered them to come forward and receive the priestly blessing from me, saying that they would be yielded a great profit from it. They, running together in barbaric fashion drew forward, some from behind, others from the sides, others yet standing back, walking upon others and extending their hands. Some pulled on my beard, while others took hold of my garments. I would have been asphyxiated by their vehement advance, had [Symeon] not scattered them with a shout.

Theodoret's claims for the conversion of Arabs at Symeon's stele are at first sight untenable. The Arabs took many an idol of el-'Uzza, the Arab equivalent of the Greek Aphrodite, from their baggage train and smashed it in a state of religious exaltation, but ancestral customs (ἔθη τὰ πατρῷα) of a transhumant tribal society could not have been altered without fundamental changes in its economic life and means of subsistence, in other words the partial sedentarization of the tribe in agriculture or its voluntary cantonment near the residence of a catechist. Theodoret claims, in this connection, that the Arabs "received laws from that sacred tongue . . . [and] contemned the diet of wild asses and camels."[164] This would meet the economic requirements for the conversion of the group, but no information is provided about the site of their association with sedentary communities.[165] Theodoret had seen enough of the bedouins' culture to doubt that this transformation of their social and economic order could be achieved expeditiously:[166]

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[163] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 16.14 (Canivet 2, 192f.).

[164] Ibid.

[165] By way of contrast, see the following section on St. Euthymius' work with the Arabs of the Parembolē.

[166] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 16.15 (Canivet 2, 192–95).

> I saw another such event. One tribe approached the divine man that he would send up a prayer for their phylarch, but another tribe that was present contradicted this, saying that the prayer should not be offered for him but for their own chieftain. For one was unjust, but the other was the opposite of unjust. After great contention had arisen and a barbarian skirmish ensued, they finally went against each other. I used many words and encouraged them to keep peace, indicating that the holy man had sufficient blessing to impart even to both chieftains, but the former said it should not be done for the latter, while the latter's men attempted to deprive the former of it. From above [on his stele] Symeon halted them and called them dogs, but this hardly extinguished their contention. I say these things to demonstrate the *faith of their intention*, for they would not have raged against each other except that they believed the blessing of the law-giving man had great force.

Symeon thus became a sort of animate tribal totem that each group wished to keep exclusively for itself.

Two other instances of Arabs' conversion at Djebel Sim'ān require mention. In the first, a phylarch of Saracens brought in a man struck by paralysis on the Roman road near Callinicum. The invalid foreswore his ancestral cults and acknowledged the Christian Trinity prior to his cure.[167] The Arab leader was evidently the sheikh of one of the recently converted tribes. The sick man was perhaps a long-distance trader, for otherwise his own clan of pastoralists or village community would have cared for him. He may well have been an Arab. In the second instance, a "queen of the Ishmaelites", that is the wife of a sheikh or phylarch, sent certain of the tribal notables to Symeon to request his prayer to grant childbirth. Her prayers to el-'Uzza-Aphrodite had evidently failed, so she acknowledged Christ. After her confinement, she sent this first-born child to Symeon for his blessing (εὐλογία).[168] These services produced a yearning for the person of Symeon reserved for the closest of kinfolk, as is described in the Safaitic inscriptions.[169] As was seen, at other times it roused the competitive instincts of the sheikhs who visited Djebel Sim'ān.

It is quite probable that Symeon had assistants at Djebel Sim'ān who effected the instruction of the Arabs on a tribe by tribe basis. Each will have received a catechist, but the record is silent on this. Another text, Cyril of Scythopolis' *Life of Euthymius*, provides corroboration about the method used to Christianize Arab tribes that probably reflects fairly typical practice.[170] Euthymius, born at Melitene in the Armenian borderlands c. 377, had the qualifications to convert Arabs, for his native town lay in a trilingual district where Armenian, Greek, and Aramaic were spoken.[171] Having risen to the rank of presbyter at the see of Melitene, he supervised the monasteries in the *territorium* of the city where a dialect of Syriac must have been spoken. After arriving at Jerusalem at the age of twenty-nine c. 406, Euthymius worked silk (ἐργάζεσθαι σειράν) outside the laura at Pharan some six miles outside the city. Here he made the acquaintance of a local farmer, for whom he performed a cure, and probably many others. It is quite possible that a mixed Arabic- and Aramaic-speaking resided in the countryside east of Jerusalem.[172] Thereafter Euthymius migrated with his ally Theoktistos to a wadi where shepherds from the nearby village or estate of Lazarion grazed their flocks.[173] These folk may well have been Arabs. The monastic group, its reputation, and presumably its ability to converse in Arabic, or, failing that, Syriac, the *lingua franca* of the Fertile Crescent, began to spread.

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[167] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 16.16 (Canivet 2, 194–97).

[168] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 16.21 (Canivet 2, 202-205).

[169] Infra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 3.

Euthymius made contact with pagan Arabs thereafter, c. 420.[174] An Arabic chieftain, who had held the Sassanid title of Spahbedh ("army leader") and was generally called Aspebetos, the Semitic form of the word in Greek transliteration, approached Euthymius, asking him to cure his son Terebon, who had suffered a paralysis of the right side of his body.[175] Aspebetos now held the title of phylarch by a treaty with the Romans, having defected from the Sassanids with his entire clan (συγγένεια) and moveable property (οὐσία). The *magister militum per Orientem* Anatolius had assigned them abodes in the Provincia Arabia, which lay to the east and across the Jordan from Euthymius' small community.[176] Aspebetos had with his clan perhaps resided previously near Ctesiphon (ὑπὸ τῶν κατὰ πόλιν μάγων, where πόλις is perhaps Madā'in or Ctesiphon),[177] and had no doubt lived in close contact with a sedentary Aramaean Christian population. Although still a pagan

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[170] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii* in *Kyrillos von Skythopolis*, ed. Eduard Schwartz (Texte und Untersuchungen 49/2, Leipzig 1939).

[171] *V. Euthymii* 2 (Schwartz, 9).

[172] *V. Euthymii* 6 (Schwartz, 14, lines 3–16).

[173] *V. Euthymii* 8 (Schwartz, 15f.).

[174] *V. Euthymii* 10 (Schwartz, 18, note).

[175] *V. Euthymii* 10 (Schwartz, 18, line 12ff.).

[176] *V. Euthymii* 10 (Schwartz, 18f.).

[177] *V. Euthymii* 10 (Schwartz, 19, line 1).

(Ἕλλην), he felt pity for them when the Zoroastrian *magi* initiated a persecution against them and got Yazdigerd I (399–420) in 420 to order his allied Arabs to block the routes leading toward the Roman frontiers to forestall any Christian migration.[178] Aspebetos' motive for defecting to the Romans lay partially in the feelings of pity which the persecution aroused in him. This is, at any rate, Cyril of Scythopolis' assertion.

The hagiographer is silent about the characteristics of Aspebetos' cult, naming no deities or specific cult practices. The latter are simply referred to as "pagan rites passed on by his ancestors" (ὑπὸ συμπαθείας κινούμενος καίπερ τὰ Ἑλλήνων ἐκ προγόνων θρησκεύων).[179] Furthermore, upon bringing Terebon to Euthymius for the cure, Aspebetos admitted the failure of "physicians' science and magic practices" to restore the boy's health (διὰ πάσης ἰατρικῆς ἐπιστήμης καὶ μαγικῆς περιεργείας).[180] Other aspects of their cult were, in the words of Euthymius, "the invocations and fictions of the astronomers and astrologers . . . incantations and magical folly" (αἱ ἐπικλήσεις καὶ αἱ μυθοποιίαι τῶν ἀστρονόμων τε καὶ ἀστρολόγων . . . αἱ ἐπαοιδίαι καὶ αἱ γοητικαὶ ἐρεσχελίαι).[181] All this flowery but vague terminology seems to reflect the cult practices relating to al-'Uzza, the Arabic goddess embodied in the evening star whom Theodoret calls Aphrodite after the Greek fashion. There were, at any rate, persons among the clansmen of Aspebetos' tribe skilled in the interpretation of celestial phenomena, which must have included setting the date for the festivals of al-'Uzza by the phase of the moon.[182] The so-called "incantations and magical folly" possibly reflect the work of the *kāhins*, tribal shamans reputed to be able to communicate with spirits and find lost objects, and "poets"

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[178] Bury, *LRE* 2, 4.

[179] *V. Euthymii* 10 (Schwartz, 19, line 3f.).

[180] *V. Euthymii* 10 (Schwartz, 19, line 23f.).

[181] *V. Euthymii* 10 (Schwartz, 19f.).

[182] Cf. the report c. 575 A.D. of the pilgrim Antoninus, who records the new moon festival of an unnamed divinity. His story is quite obviously based on hearsay evidence while passing through the Sinai peninsula: "On a part of the same mountain the Saracens have set up their own idol, white as snow. Their priest resides there, clothed in a dalmatic and a linen pallium. When the time comes for their cult festival, when the new moon arrives, it is said that before their festival day the marble begins to change color. The moon comes, whereupon they begin to worship the idol, and the marble becomes black as pitch. When the time for the cult festival has been completed, the idol returns to its original color, whence all are wholly amazed." Antoninus Martyr, *Perambulatio Locorum Sanctorum* in *Itinera et Descriptiones Terrae Sanctae*, ed. T. Tobler, 1 (Geneva 1877), 113.

(*shāʿirūna*), who supposedly uttered their verses in an elevated state inspired by spirits (*jinn*).[183]

The occasion of Aspebetos' conversion was the cure which the monk Euthymius administered to his son Terebon by making the sign of the cross. The Arab chieftain invoked "the great and fearful God" of the Christians (ὁ Θεὸς ὁ μέγας καὶ φοβερός) in supplication before the miracle, then sought out the monk in the desert ten miles east of Jerusalem in the wadi north of the Jericho road. The formula that Aspebetos pronounced may have had roots in Arab polytheism. The "conversion" of the tribe followed, this the result of the chieftain's adhesion to the new religion (παρεκάλουν λαβεῖν τὴν ἐν Χριστῷ σφραγῖδα).[184] Cyril of Scytholpolis relates the procedure in detail:[185]

> Euthymius surmised that they believed in Christ from the soul and ordered a small baptismal font to be built at the corner of the cave. It is preserved until the present day. Having instructed them he baptized them all. He changed the name of Aspebetos to Peter. [Euthymius] baptized him first, and after him a certain Maris, his cousin on his mother's side. Both men were suitable in sagacity and long in distinction of wealth. [Euthymius] next baptized Terebon and the rest. Having kept them with himself for forty days and having enlightened them with the divine word and having given them a suitable foundation, he sent them away no longer as Agarenes and Ishmaelites, but as descendants of Sara. . . .

Some important considerations emerge from this description. First and most important, the tribe was baptized after very little instruction. This came during the following month or so. The adherence of Aspebetos-Peter and Maris to the Christian God sufficed to ensure the catechization and good conduct of the clansmen thereafter. The workings of tribal society, which gave the individual little safety outside the group, would have turned dissidents into renegades at risk for their lives. The great men of the tribe whose wealth must have been in animals, precious metal objects, slaves and coins, had undergone sincere conversion. Of Peter we shall hear more later. Maris enrolled himself with Euthymius' monks and placed his own considerable property at their disposal for the building and expansion of the monastery.[186] This act will, among other things, have provided Euthymius and the monks with inestimable intelligence about the cultural workings and social structure of the Arab tribes, and have added a spokesman to the group who could converse idiomatically with all future comers. It is impossible to assess whether all Aspebetos-Peter's relatives and clients accepted Christianity "from the soul" (ἐκ ψυχῆς), but the conversion of their leaders along with their tribal group dynamics sufficed to achieve the effect.

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[183] This view is necessarily speculative. Irfan Shahid's *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century* (Washington, D.C. 1989), has no comment on this subject. For the identification of al-'Uzza with Aphrodite-Phosphoros, see: idem, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century* (Washington, D.C. 1984), 288–90, with bibliography. Cf. MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire*, 2f.

[184] *V. Euthymii* 10 (Schwartz, 20, line 26).

[185] *V. Euthymii* 10 (Schwartz, 20f.).

To return to Theodoret's account of mass conversions at the stele of Symeon Stylites the Elder, it can hardly be doubted that the great monastery at Djebel Sim'ān had the personnel and determination necessary to effect the kinds of conversion, including that of whole tribes, practiced by Euthymius in the Judaean desert. This required an initial impression of great emotional intensity. Symeon's commanding and striking presence atop the pillar, together with an *askesis* that matched the privation of a trek by the bedouin across a difficult stretch of desert, produced the desired effect. Theodoret's narrative takes us this far, but no further. The Arabs nearly pulled him apart in a veritable stampede toward the stele, as a text quoted above describes with scarcely concealed amusement.[187] The tribes' allegiance to the holy man was funneled through the chieftains, who at times held the title of phylarch from the government at Constantinople.[188] Symeon could apparently converse in Arabic, and knew well how to use to common insult of "dog" in order to keep his client in line.[189]

Symeon, like Euthymius, effected conversions by means of cures. Theodoret cites only one example, but phenomena of this sort must have occurred constantly at the monastery. In one instance, an unnamed phylarch of the Saracens carried in a man who had become paralyzed at or near Callinicum, the great frontier fortress on the Euphrates river that lay in the province of Euphratensis some 110 kilometers from Djebel Sim'ān.[190] This datum gives us some idea of the distances trekked by the Arabs, who lived on the desert fringe, to reach Symeon's stele. Theodoret summarizes the affair in this wise:[191]

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[186] *V. Euthymii* 10 (Schwartz, 21, lines 13–15).

[187] Supra, this section, n. 163.

[188] Supra, this section, n. 166.

[189] Cf. the insult administered by an imperial *sakellarios* to the allied Arab border guards in 631/2: "The emperor gives hardly enough pay to the soldiers. How much more can he give to these dogs?" Theophanes, *Chronographia* A.M. 6123 (De Boor 1, 335f.).

[190] It might be possible to establish the identity of the phylarch from the districts of his campsites.

> I saw a splendid miracle that occurred at another time. A certain phylarch of the Saracens asked the divine head to aid a man whose limbs had been paralyzed on the road. He said this illness had struck him at Callinicum, that great fortress. [Symeon] commanded the man, who was brought into the midst, to foreswear the impiety of his ancestors. When he assented gladly, and hearkened, and fulfilled the command, he was asked if he believed in the Trinity. When the man confessed that he believed, Symeon said: "For believing on these names, stand up!" . . . All persons present moved their tongues in a hymnody to God.

The basis of Theodoret's conversion stories was the experience of a short visit to the monastery, perhaps during a time of heavy traffic from the eastern frontier. If so, the picture is somewhat distorted, as many Syrians and Greeks will also have frequented the place. Symeon's *pourparlers* with the Arabs made a sensation with the learned author, and these he chose for the substance of his narration.[192]

It has been suggested that enthusiastic conversions, especially those which accompanied cures, were but the beginning of the process of Christianization for the limitrophic Arabs. Theodoret had much to say about this, but little on what came afterward. To understand the subsequent process more fully, it is necessary to return to the biography of Euthymius, which documents the post-baptismal catechization of Aspebetos-Peter's tribe in great detail. Peter returned on another occasion with more Arab men, women and children, who received baptism. The hagiographer leaves the issue of their membership in Aspebetos-Peter's tribe open. The people were perhaps recently acquired tribal dependents. The chieftain saw in this case the merit of religious uniformity in his tribal group. Euthymius imposed a period of instruction both before and after the administration of baptism, the latter lasting for seven days. The monk had transferred his abode to the hills of the desert, but returned to the monastery to Christianize these folk. They resided in that spot for an indeterminate period of time.[193]

Euthymius' monastery became thereafter a fixed shrine frequented by Peter's Arabs. The chieftain hired artisans, who constructed a number of buildings:[194]

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[191] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 16.16 (Canivet 2, 194–97).

[192] Cf. the other cases discussed infra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 4.

[193] *V. Euthymii* 15 (Schwartz, 24, line 11ff.).

[194] *V. Euthymii* 15 (Schwartz, 24, line 17ff.). Cf. D.J. Chitty and A.H.M. Jones, "The Church of St. Euthymius at Khan el-Amar near Jerusalem," *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement* (1928), 174–178.

> [They] built a great cistern with two entrances which is preserved until today in the garden, built a bakery nearby, and made three cells for the holy man [Euthymius] and a church in their midst. The jackals of Arabia thereupon called upon him and came to stay near him because of the rational flock-tending of Christ.

This resulted in the establishment of a central shrine "at a place between the two monasteries", which I take to mean somewhere between the new monastic buildings and the cave of the "desert-loving" (φιλέρημος) Euthymius. He marked out the foundation plan (χαράξας) of the church on the site and instructed the Arabs, who seem from now on to have come from outside Aspebetos-Peter's group (being called the "jackals of Arabia", οἱ ποτὲ λύκοι τῆς Ἀραβίας), to erect their tents in a circle around the precincts of the church. They built the church and stayed there under Euthymius' close catechetical supervision (καὶ ἐπεσκέπτετο αὐτοὺς πυκνότερον) until he procured a presbyter and deacons for them. The patriarch Juvenal of Jerusalem (421–458) either sent them out, appointed them from the monks or ordained them from the newly converted Arabs.[195] Euthymius' method resembles that used to Christianize pagan villages in Anatolia and Syria, which consisted in having monks who knew the rustic ethos and local dialect conduct the initial catechization and baptisms, and then having regular clergy under the jurisdiction of the local bishop take charge.[196]

The final phase of the Christianization of the phylarchic border tribes of the Provincia Arabia came about through the formation of an ethnically Arabic episcopate. This became necessary as large numbers of encampments (διαφόραι παρεμβολαί) of recently baptized Arabs—probably differentiated into kin-groups of various sizes—began to accumulate. Juvenal of Jerusalem, acting on Euthymius' request, appointed Aspebetos-Peter "bishop of the Encampments" (τῶν Παρεμβολῶν ἐπίσκοπος).[197] The geographical limits of this *ad hoc* diocese are unknown, but it may well have spanned the Jordan river, which separates the ecclesiastical province of First Palestine from Arabia. Nor can the importance of an ethnically Arabic episcopate and regular clergy be underrated in the Hellenization of these kin-groups.[198] As a chieftain with many clients, the bishop Peter could impose the twin requirements of

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[195] Euthymius was himself a presbyter.

[196] Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," passim.

[197] *V. Euthymii* 15 (Schwartz, 25, line 1ff.).

[198] Cf. infra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 4.

Christianization and Hellenization on all comers. The bishops of the Encampments represented their sees at the Oecumenical Councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451) thanks to Juvenal's need for a strong retinue there. Euthymius continued to instruct and baptize Arabs who straggled in from the *limes* even after this time, "a multitude of barbarian Arabs" (βαρβάρων πλῆθος Σαρακηνῶν).[199] This phrase distinguishes between the partially Hellenized Arabs of the Encampments and their non-acculturated pagan countrymen from the desert fringe. The monastic church at this time received ornamentation at bishop Peter's expense.[200] The use of Greek scriptures and inscriptions will have aided the process of Hellenization. It can hardly be doubted that after a few generations a bilingual clergy emerged from this process, or that many Arabs acquired the sedentary trades associated with village life, including stone-masonry, baking, carpentry, and so forth. The epigraphic record bears out this hypothesis in graphic terms.[201]

III. Arab Polytheism in Light of the Safaitic Inscriptions

The presence of so many Arabs accepting Christianity on the desert fringe of Syria necessitates a closer look at their religious beliefs. This is not the place to undertake a detailed analysis of pre-Islamic Arab religion. On the other hand, the discussion about the conversion of many tribes will have little meaning unless their religious attitudes are briefly examined. There is practically no microinstitutional analysis of this question available. Robertson Smith's *Religion of the Semites* is still useful, but fails to address the Arabs as a unique cultural group and makes little use of the numerous Safaitic inscriptions of the first through third centuries A.D., which provide important empirical evidence on the question at hand.[202] This analysis is undertaken in the same terms as that of Hellenic, Syrian, and Egyptian polytheism. The site of il-'Isâwi near Nemarah on the eastern fringe of the Provincia Arabia has been chosen as the primary example from Enno Littmann's collection of Safaitic inscriptions because of the very large number of inscriptions found in the place.[203] This discussion should put the observations of Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Cyril of Scythopolis into a more realistic reference frame.

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[199] Supra, this section, no. 197.

[200] *V. Euthymii* 16 (Schwartz, 26, line 15ff.).

[201] This argument is consistent with the discussion below in Ch. X and XI. I. Shahid has, however, argued strongly in favor of the existence of an Arabic Christian liturgy in *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century* (Washington, D.C. 1989), 196–99, 422–29, 515f.

[202] For recent comment on the Safaitic inscriptions and an up-to-date bibliography, see: J.T. Milik, "Epigraphie safaitique," *Hauran I/I: Recherches archéologiques sur la Syrie du Sud à l'époque hellénistique et romaine*, ed J.-M. Dentzer (Paris 1985), 183–88. The term "Safaitic" comes from the so-called Safā, a lava region southeast of Damascus where most of the inscriptions have turned up. Their main area of concentration is on the eastern side of Djebel Hauran. The inscriptions date mostly from the 1st–4th c. A.D. Their disappearance after this time is attributed to the Tanūkhid migration into this zone, whereafter the Safaitic tribes lost their distinctiveness. J.S. Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times* (London 1979), 91–93. There is a considerable number of collections of Safaitic

Arab religiosity arose out of the material, economic, and social circumstances of a life led on the desert fringe of eastern Syria and Arabia. The region was usually arid, and in consequence these Arabs had become almost exclusively pastoralists.[204] Unless more perilous problems intervened, their usual needs were water and abundant grazing fodder for their animals. Disputes and intertribal wars at times arose over the territoriality implied in this mode of subsistence. It was a life of chronic uncertainty and deprivation, yet one in which joys both melancholy and refreshing sometimes emerged in the written record. The Arabs attributed functions to their divinities that could aid them in every arduous and unpredictable circumstance.

The Arab pantheon was quite numerous, but in practice most persons invoked a single deity when feelings of distress overcame them. The most commonly attested deity is the female Allāt, who seems to have been associated with the Greek Athena, and is not to be confused with al-'Uzza or the Greek Aphrodite. Yet she was far from being a fertility deity in Arab popular belief. In the inscriptions at ancient Oriza (present-day il-'Isāwi) Allāt is invoked in a roughly equal number of times to all the other divinities combined,

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inscriptions. Enno Littmann, *Zur Entzifferung der Safā-Inschriften* (Leipzig 1901). F.V. Winnett, *Safaitic Inscriptions from Jordan* (Toronto 1957). Idem and G.L. Harding, *Inscriptions from Fifty Safaitic Cairns* (Toronto 1978). W.G. Oxtoby, *Some Inscriptions of the Safaitic Bedouin* (New Haven 1968). Cf. especially G.L. Harding, *An Index and Concordance of Pre-Islamic Arabian Names and Inscriptions* (Toronto 1971). For the edition used in the present chapter, see next note. Cf. also Hubert Grimme, *Texte und Untersuchungen zur safaitisch-arabischen Religion* (Paderborn 1929).

[203] *Publications of the Princeton University Expeditions to Syria in 1904-5 and 1909, Division IV: Semitic Inscriptions, Section C: Safaitic Inscriptions*, ed. Enno Littmann (Leiden 1943), nos. 281–518, 931–1117 have been considered for the following discussion. A comparative discusion of other sites would have been of interest, but is impracticable in light of the aims set for this study. Littmann's collection is hereinafter cited as Littmann, PAES IV C. The Nabataean inscriptions are also relevant. I have confined my discussion of the latter to the footnotes of Ch. XI infra.

[204] For the sedentary Arabs of the Provincia Arabia, see infra, Ch. XI, passim.

about twenty-five times in 423 inscriptions. It is striking that the other deities are all male, as for example the Nabataean Dushara or Dusares (attested twice), Baal-Shamin (twice attested), and Shai (twice attested), but particularly the true Arab god Rudai (attested ten times). Practically every known tutelary function of war and peace was attributed to Allāt. She was clearly predominant in the deserts around Nemarah east of Djebel Hauran. Let us examine her role in alleviating the urgent concerns of the limitrophic Arabs, for it was she that many clans renounced when they accepted Christianity at the foot of Symeon's stele in the mid-fifth century.

The economy round about Oriza was predominantly pastoral. The camel was, as it were, the staff of life. The inscriptions mention or depict them more frequently than all other animals combined. These animals provided meat and sure conveyance from one water source to the next. A man's wealth was measured by the number of camels he possessed. Hence, Allāt witnessed documents of sale and ownership in which the transaction was recorded on stone and the camel depicted. Allāt was called upon at times to curse anyone who effaced the contract with deafness, ejection from the tomb, and so forth.[205] The male divinity Ruḍai also witnessed these transactions.[206] The ownership of two-humped dromedary camels was considered a sign of particular wealth and status.[207] When his camels gave birth to foals and produced abundant milk, a certain 'Akh b. Sa'd gave special thanks to Allāt for the "spring camels" (*murbi'āt*) with a formula that recurs often in the other inscriptions: "So, O Allāt [give] peace!"[208] Il-'Isāwi was called "the valley", perhaps after its ancient name Oriza,[209] to which the bedouin would pass after watering their camels at Nemarah (the han-Namārat of the Safaitic inscriptions).[210] The neglect of camels led to ostracism, as a man named Ward b. Ḥibb discovered. He recorded the bitter experience for posterity:[211]

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[205] Littmann, PAES IV C, 282, 317, 448, 449, 931, 1002, 1021, 1039, 1061, 1076, 1114.

[206] The male divinity Ruḍai also witnessed these transactions ("And, O Ruḍai, help!"), as did Radu. Littmann, PAES IV C, 482, 442.

[207] Littmann, PAES IV C, 325.

[208] Littmann, PAES IV C, 357.

[209] Littmann, PAES IV C, 326, 374.

[210] Littmann, PAES IV C, 357, 426.

[211] Littmann, PAES IV C, 407.

> And he encamped at this place; and he tended the flocks seeking green fodder at the expense of the community. And he rushed forth in the year in which he was grieved by the scoff of the people: he drove together and lost the camels. So, O Baal-Shamin, [give] rest to him who leaves this untouched. . . .

This hireling escaped and relieved his disgrace by a written confession. Here Baal-Shamin the Nabataean sun god witnessed the act.

The Arabs had other domesticated animals. The most common after camels were goats.[212] The bedouin stopped at il-ʿIsāwi in the birthing season.[213] A small number of sales contracts for donkeys exists and also one for a horse.[214] As will be seen, horses were quite precious and were reserved primarily for fighting. Goats cut from flocks seem to have been used for feasts and perhaps for religious sacrifices.[215] This meat supply was periodically supplemented by hunting wild gazelle, which roamed the area in small herds.[216]

Agricultural products were a small but essential part of the bedouin diet at il-ʿIsāwi. Contrary to Theodoret of Cyrrhus' supposition, wheat was sometimes imported and ground for baking. The Arabs' dependence on this comestible for basic subsistence is suggested by the inscription of a Gumain b. ʾAnʿam, who encamped at il-ʿIsāwi "in the year of the famine."[217] It was evidently purchased on the nearby and fertile Ruḥbeh plain. Dates on the other hand served both human and animal consumption. On one occasion date stones seem to have sickened a flock of she-camels. Here the male divinity Raḍu was invoked to grant them restored health.[218]

The sickening of the camels reflects the constant need for good fodder. Il-ʿIsāwi was considered a reliable site for this.[219] The autumn and winter rains left the parts around Nemarah full of verdure,[220] but were sometimes torrential. A shepherd called Dā'if b. Sākhir, driven away with his flocks by the autumnal rains, called upon Allāt for relief with the usual formula: "So, O Allāt, [give] peace!"[221] This was, strictly speaking, a job for the local Baal, but the Arabs had in time transferred many functions to the goddess. Dā'if went elsewhere to graze his sheep or perhaps came back after the storms had ended. The terror of immoderate rains is reflected in the words of one man who "walked the whole night in the mire."[222] When torrents filled the wadis it caused great terror. Two men who escaped such a flash flood (*sail* in Arabic) at a watering place for camels recorded the experience and invoked Allāt against future harm.[223] One of them prayed: "So, O Allāt, peace to him who remained [safe]!"[224] Men and animals must have been swept away in these disasters. Allāt, more than any other deity, was charged with protecting men from the unpredictability of these floods, which came racing down with no clear meteorological warning sometimes many miles away from the actual site of the rainfall. Men experienced the uncertainty with great emotional pain. One 'An'am b. Ṭamāthan escaped a torrent at Rass, and came to il-'Isāwi looking for friends and kin after a torrent, but they were no longer there: "And he found traces of his fellows and longed [for them]."[225] The Arabs' terrible longing for friends and kin who left inscriptions, tombs, and drawings behind will concern us later. In contrast, the best season at il-'Isāwi was the springtime. The impression of peace and verdure caused men to indicate the season of their stay.[226] Khalaf b. Ba'ir adds: "So, O Allāt, [grant] protection from adversity and cunning."[227]

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[212] Littmann, PAES IV C, 351.
[213] Littmann, PAES IV C, 281, 419, 1064.
[214] Littmann, PAES IV C, 457, 464, 514.
[215] Littmann, PAES IV C, 290, 297.
[216] Littmann, PAES IV C, 481, 488, 489.
[217] Littmann, PAES IV C, 950 and 386.
[218] The inscription may also be read as "during his absence" instead of "by their date-stones". Littman, PAES IV C, 335.
[219] Littmann, PAES IV C, 379.
[220] Littmann, PAES IV C, 355, 406.
[221] Littmann, PAES IV C, 355.

Permanent buildings were rare in the ethos of the il-'Isāwi bedouin. Only one house (*ha-bit*) is mentioned.[228] Even the placement of tents lent authority to claims of territoriality: "This tent (*qubbah*) and this place [belong] to Sarīy b. Bunān."[229] The man seems to have come down from Nabk between Ḥomṣ-Emesa and Damascus. The absence of ground water frustrated any scheme of permanent habitation: "And he sank a well in a place where water was not found."[230] There were two commonly identifiable structures at il-'Isāwi and other Safaitic sites: the long circular stone barriers to corral flocks, and tombs. Inscriptions on the tombs of dead relatives and allies are by far the most common type of Safaitic text.

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[222] Littmann, PAES IV C, 288.
[223] Littmann, PAES IV C, 435.
[224] Littmann, PAES IV C, 436.
[225] Littmann, PAES IV C, 438.
[226] Littmann, PAES IV C, 374, 1103.
[227] Littmann, PAES IV C, 374.
[228] Littmann, PAES IV C, 949.
[229] Littmann, PAES IV C, 1019.
[230] Littmann, PAES IV C, 1051.

The typical tomb was simply a pile of stones. Friends and kin who returned to il-'Isāwi and other sites would lay stones on the familiar tombs and sometimes record the act with an inscription. One writer named Nashshal b. Muqīm who laid stones on the tombs of his father and three other men calls upon Allāt to strike blind anyone who effaced the inscription.[231] The inscriptions also mention grandfathers, maternal uncles, mothers, brothers and friends.[232] The bedouin regarded Allāt in some sense as the guardian of tombs, as also the avenger of any who defaced the intentions expressed on the markers. Relatively few of these inscriptions mention the goddess (some twenty-two at il-'Isāwi). Sometimes tombs served merely as convenient reference points for encampments.[233]

There is an important exception to this rule at il-'Isāwi, where a member of the Nabataean tribe of 'Awīdh constructed a low wall of stones around several graves and made it a sanctuary (*hamīy*):[234]

> And he found the inscriptions of his fellows and was sad. In the year in which he united tombs and made them honored as a sanctuary of the tribe of 'Awīdh. So, O Gad-'Awīdh and Dūshara and Allāt, [grant] help of protection to him who leaves [them untouched] and freedom from want and enmity! But dumbness and lameness to him who destroys this inscription! And booty to him who leaves [it untouched]!

The triadic invocation includes the tutelary tribal god Gad-'Awīdh, the Nabataean Dūsharā, and the ubiquitous Allāt. As every Arab invoked and feared the powers of the last-named divinity, it was a wise addition. The rewards for piety consisted of the help of protection, freedom from want, freedom from envy, and rich booty, all of them tightly bound up with the urgent social, economic, and political concerns of the bedouin. *Hamīy* is also the Arabic word for temenos or sanctuary.[235] Yet religious sanctuaries seem to be quite rare at Safaitic sites. The tomb sanctuaries have no religious significance apart from the curses laid on their violators. The "tombs of the 'Awīdh" probably remained a prominent topographical feature and is apparently noted as a campsite in a later inscription.[236] The common tomb of another extended family once stood at il-'Isāwi as well:[237]

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[231] Littmann, PAES IV C, 308.

[232] Littmann, PAES IV C, 368, 371, 405, 1101.

[233] Littmann, PAES IV C, 361, 369.

[234] Littmann, PAES IV C, 342.

[235] J. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums* (Berlin 1927), 105–109. The author discusses several of the divinites named in the Safaitic inscriptions, but from the standpoint of the Islamic sources mainly. Among these are Allāt (29ff.), al-'Uzza (34ff.), Dhu Schara (i.e. Dūsharā) (48ff.), and Ruda (58f.). The Safaitic word *hamīy* corresponds roughly to the Greek *temenos* or "enclosed space" sacred to the divinity.

> And he laid stones on the tombs of his father and of his mother and of his brothers and of his maternal uncle and of 'Uwais. So, O Allāt, peace to him who leaves them untouched. But blindness to him who effaces this inscription, and ejection [from the tomb]!

The tomb sanctuary inscriptions of the 'Awīdh reflect an intense sense of personal loyalty to kin and friends. The harsh life of bedouin on the desert fringe gave rise to deep feelings of friendship, fear, and vengefulness among the men of this society. The Arab divinities and Allāt in particular held an important place in the minds of these folk when events tested their attitudes.

Intertribal wars brought out terrifying feelings of insecurity brought on by night marches and lonely vigils keeping watch for friend and foeman alike that the literate bedouin wrote down. Allāt served as a special protector in these crises. 'Amm b. Ḥunn writes: "And he made a hasty journey; and he was looking out for (the?) Malīkat (?) until this time. So, O Allāt and Ruḍai, [give] peace!"[238] The idea of peace (*salam*) is charged with special meaning here,[239] as it is in the instance of Mun'im who begs for it while "on the lookout for the enemy."[240] A third text puts it even more succinctly: "And he [Mātī b. Qashish] was on the lookout under the protection of Allāt."[241] Wars disrupted pastoral life. 'An'am b. 'Abd writes:[242]

> And he tended the goats by himself, in the year of the war of the tribe of Dā'if, with the utmost difficulty. So, O Allāt, [give] peace, and be cursed he who destroys this inscription.

The tribal fighters evidently threatened to make off with 'An'am's sheep as booty, even though he belonged to neither group. Kinfolk became separated and died in the fighting, producing grief and terror. One of the 'Awīdh wrote:[243]

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[236] Littmann, PAES IV C, 361.
[237] Littmann, PAES IV C, 405.
[238] Littmann, PAES IV C, 353. The meaning of the proper name is uncertain. Littmann's suggestion that it was an allied tribe seems plausible.
[239] For a similar text, Littmann, PAES IV C, 354.
[240] Littmann, PAES IV C, 469.
[241] Littmann, PAES IV C, 1010.
[242] Littmann, PAES IV C, 360.
[243] Littmann, PAES IV C, 306.

> And he was heavy-hearted on account of his brother and on account of his father and on account of his uncle. And he was afraid of the enemy. So, O Allāt and Gad-'Awīdh, [grant] protection! And he found the traces of his fellows and longed for them.

Men feared for themselves, too. 'Asyab b. Ganth observes: "And, O Raḍu, [grant] security from being stabbed!"[244] In the tribal wars and in trouble with the Roman authorities, who had forces based at Nemarah,[245] men usually fought on horseback and with lances.[246] It is worth noting that even men encamped in front of Nemarah felt insecure: "And he [Qadam b. 'An'am] spent the summer in front of han-Namārat, and he was afraid of the enemy. So, O Allāt, [grant] protection."[247]

The camping ground at il-'Isāwi became a refuge for any and all fleeing from intrafamilial and tribal disputes, and from the Roman government. Vagrants without familial or tribal affiliations address the god or goddess anonymously: "By Rab'an and Yas'ad and Mush'im. And protection be [granted] to them, these from the enemy."[248] Allāt, like Allah on the Arabian peninsula, was thought to guarantee the rights of asylum to refugees. A man named Kāmil b. Gauth got his sister, married to one of his friends, to shelter him from some trouble. Kāmil prays: "So, O Allāt, peace to him who ran away!" (i.e. "and sought asylum").[249] Public criminals, whether brigands or soldiers in the Roman auxiliary forces who had deserted, made their way to il-'Isāwi as well. Malīkat b. 'Abān was perhaps a highwayman: "And he went astray and made a hasty journey. And, O Dusares, protect him against the government!"[250] Another man "escaped from the government" (*has-sulṭān*), that is the Roman. He was probably a deserter.[251]

Amidst all this social flux, friendships with reliable men were essential. The feelings evoked by these relationships born amidst struggle aroused grief and vengefulness if misfortune destroyed them. The inscriptions at il-'Isāwi reflect such views with varying degrees of intensity. Shāmit b. 'Abd expresses inveterate grief upon coming across the markings and tomb of an old friend:[252]

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[244] Littmann, PAES IV C, 418. Other possible readings are "from calumnation" and "from Ta'anat".

[245] Glen Bowersock, *Roman Arabia* (Cambridge, Mass. 1983), 140.

[246] Littmann, PAES IV C, 462.

[247] Littmann, PAES IV C, 330. More general expressions of fear turn up as well: "O Raḍu, deliver us from adversity, and may we be saved!" Ibid. 495.

[248] Littmann, PAES IV C, 427.

[249] Littmann, PAES IV C, 412.

[250] Littmann, PAES IV C, 1013.

[251] Littmann, PAES IV C, 424.

> And he found the inscription of Kāmid and longed [for him] vehemently. And he laid stones on the tomb of Qadam and of Kāmid and of Sā'id. So, O Allāt, peace to him who leaves [this inscription untouched]! But blindness to him who effaces [it]!

More typically, the bedouin simply recorded finding "traces" of their fellows and longing for them.[253] One man "cried over those who were lost" after finding their inscriptions.[254] Another "mourned, overshadowed [by grief]" and invoked the peace of the divinity Shai' haq-Qaum.[255] Another man yet expresses his feeling with restraint: "And he laid a stone on the tomb of Ḥabīb (or "a friend") in friendship."[256] True violence of feeling comes forth from men demanding blood revenge, whose thunderings and screamings the epigraphy transmits only faintly:[257]

> And he found this inscription of Mann-'ēl and the inscription of Taim-'ēl and the inscription of Sākhir, who were deceased. So, O Allāt, peace to him who has remained safe, and vengeance on him who has killed! And he laid stones on the tombs of 'Aus and of Wādi' and of all the deceased. And, O Baal-Shamīn, strike blind him who effaces this inscription!

Others are more specific:[258]

> And he laid stones on the tombs of Mālik and of Khārig and of Gamm and of 'Iyās and of Zann. So, O Allāt and Dūsharā, grant blood-vengeance! And strike blind him who effaces [this inscription]. And may the lion alight upon the effacer! Wāqi' of the tribe of Zaid'el.

We deduce from these and other texts that Allāt was thought to hear and act upon pleas for blood vengeance.[259] On one occasion, a man called upon Raḍu and Allāt together to collaborate in aiding him on a punitive raid setting out at sunset to avenge his father.[260] Many bedouin died in past time without obvious murderers. In these instances pleas for vengeance to Allāt might have seemed pointless and were thus omitted.[261]

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[252] Littmann, PAES IV C, 391.
[253] E.g. Littmann, PAES IV C, 399, 408.
[254] Littmann, PAES IV C, 409.
[255] Littmann, PAES IV C, 415. Cf. no. 416.
[256] Littmann, PAES IV C, 398.
[257] Littmann, PAES IV C, 305.
[258] Littmann, PAES IV C, 461.
[259] Littmann, PAES IV C, 385, 518.
[260] Littmann, PAES IV C, 460.
[261] Littmann, PAES IV C, 395.

The hardships and risks of all raids and expeditions, whether by brigands, revengers, or whole tribes, made booty essential for the fighting men. For example: "O Ruḍai, [grant] booty to him, in the year in which he directed his steps towards the hard and barren ground(?)" (perh. 152/3 A.D.). [262] Ruḍai is named elsewhere as a provisioner of booty,[263] but so is Allāt: "So, O Allāt, [grant] peace to him who leaves this inscription [untouched] (and) booty!"[264] In the latter case, the goddess is supposed to grant booty to the man who observes piety toward the inscription and the tomb of its author's father.

The implicit desire for peace and freedom from hardship was at times gratified when the parts of il-'Isāwi came under strong rule. An inscription cut in a late script, perhaps of the fourth century A.D., sums up the ideal of secure pastoralism, supra-tribal justice, and peace under Allāt:[265]

> By Māsik b. 'Ibriqān b. Māsik. And he tended the sheep in the year in which the king travelled in this valley (?). So, O Allāt, give peace!

Various suggestions about the identity of the "king" have included the Roman emperor Hadrian on his visit to Palmyra in 129, a Nabataean king who reigned before the formation of the Provincia Arabia in 105 A.D., or Imru' al-Qays, "king of all the Arabs" (ob. 328), who is regarded by some scholars as having been a Christian.[266] It seems improbable that late Roman rule c. 370–529 necessarily brought a quantifiable reduction in hardship for the bedouin who encamped at il-'Isāwi.

Allāt's powers are thus summed up in the epigraphy of il-'Isāwi. If the bedouin expressed some hope or belief in the efficacy of their invocations, they found empirical results harder to come by. Whatever certitude existed was derived from the religious experience of a few men, some of whom cut testimonial inscriptions at this campsite. One man had a dream-vision of his father, and thereafter watched for a waking one of his brother:[267]

> By Matar b. 'Amm b. Maṭar b. 'An'am b. Qadam of the tribe of 'Awīdh. And there appeared to him [a vision of] his father, and he looked out for him with his brother from the desert. So, O Allāt,

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[262] Littmann, PAES IV C, 393.
[263] Littmann, PAES IV C, 508.
[264] Littmann, PAES IV C, 344.
[265] Littmann, PAES IV C, 326.
[266] Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century*, 31–53.
[267] Littmann, PAES IV C, 325.

> peace and favor to him who leaves this inscription [untouched]. But blindness and dumbness to him who effaces this document.

A picture accompanies the inscription. It contains five figures: a man on a horse with a lance, a two-humped Bactrian camel, a dromedary, a dog, and an indistinct human figure. The last was evidently the father for whom Maṭar was looking. It is hard to say whether his father was thought to be dead or alive, but the tableau represents the content of the dream as described in the inscription, with the fuzzy shape of the spectre. Another man had a vision of his paternal uncle and invoked the curse of Allāt in a similar manner.[268] In recording the event on stone, the author Ghauth b. Ghauth drew a picture probably of Allāt, the fulfiller of his curse. The goddess stands with her arms outstretched, holding her long hair in her hands. It is difficult to say whether the drawing is based on a dreamlike epiphany or an artistic typology of the avenging Allāt.[269] The acts of "divine" blinding mentioned here were perhaps no more than the acute phases of periodic overexposure of the eyes to the sun which many bedouin endured. The individual might attach a retributive significance to his ailment if he were guilty of breaking open a grave having a curse attached to it. There were other ways of "seeing the gods". One could, for example, make pilgrimage to the great temple of Baal-Shamin at Sīʿ in the Djebel Hauran. ʿIzzuhum b. ʾAnʿam reports: "In the year in which he betook himself to the house of Baal-Samīn (sic). And he spent the night in this place (il-ʿIsāwi)."[270] The author added a rough drawing which could be the sun-disk or a plan of the great temenos at Sīʿ. Once again the author felt compelled to give a representation of the divinity as he literally saw it, whether in its cosmic aspect or that of its "house".

How did men from this harsh religious milieu discover a better answer to their material and spiritual longings in the words, but, more particularly, in the person of Symeon Stylites the Elder? The solution lies partly in Theodoret's account and partly in the Syriac life of the pillar saint composed by Simeon bar Apollon and Bar Chatar.[271] The latter provides data of an entirely different order of significance from that contained in Theodoret's rhetorically contrived treatment, which omits or blurs the phenomena of everyday life.

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[268] Littmann, PAES IV C, 403.

[269] Cf. Littmann, PAES IV C, 143, from il-Ḥifneh.

[270] This statement is followed by a "low jest" in the phrase of the editor. The Arab writer adds: "And he was the first to break wind." Littmann, PAES IV C, 350.

[271] A German translation of the Syriac text is found in: "Lobrede auf den Herrn Simeon das Haupt der Eremiten," tr. Heinrich Hilgenfeld, in *Das Leben des heiligen Symeon Stylites*, ed. Hans Lietzmann (Leipzig 1908), 80–180. Hereinafter cites as *V.*

IV. Symeon Stylites the Elder: A Semitic View

The Semitic Symeon Stylites the Elder (381–460) depicted in the Syriac biography is almost unrecognizable when compared with Theodoret of Cyrrhus' Atticized persona of the man. Furthermore, the varieties of religious experience and the material realities of everyday life expressed in the Syriac version bear more than a little resemblance to some of those mentioned in the sample of Safaitic inscriptions discussed in the previous section. Symeon's ability to win over polytheistic Arabs to the new religion derived largely from the cultural affinities of a man who had grown up in a Christian Syrian village that had intercourse with pagan Arabs who periodically came in from the desert fringe east of the Limestone Massif to trade animal products for artisan goods and bread. Symeon himself translated and expressed the powers of the Christian God in terms that struck the Arab and Syrian religious consciousness to its depths. The Syriac biography contains any number of dated events that permit some chronological analysis of Christianization.

Symeon was himself a son of Christian shepherds from the village of Ṣiṣ in the *territorium* of Nikopolis, which lay in the afternoon shadows of the Amanus massif some 50 kilometers north-northwest of Cyrrhus in the province of Euphratesia.[272] He and his brother

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Symeonis. There is a considerable literature on Symeon Stylites the Elder, but none of it has systematically dealt with this role in the Christianization of the countryside. The debate and discussion has focused more generally on the precise nature of the work of the "holy man" in the *territoria* of the cities as the rural *patronus* of the dispossessed peasantry, and as a catalyst in the "assimilation" of Mediterranean culture by the non-Hellenic populations of the hinterlands. Of particular relevance are: Peter Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971), 80–101. Idem, "Town, Village and the Holy Man: The Case of Syria," *Society and the Holy* (London 1982), 153–65. Idem, "The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity," *Representations* 1/2 (1983), 1–25. M. Whitby, "Maro the Dendrite: An Anti-social Holy Man?" *Homo Viator: Classical Essays for John Bramble*, ed. M. and M. Whitby, and P. Hardie (Bristol 1987), 309–317, Susan Harvey, "The Sense of a Stylite: Perspectives on Simeon the Elder," *Vigiliae Christianae* 42 (1988), 376–94. J. Nasrallah, "Survie de Saint Syméon Stylite l'alépin dans les gaules," *Syria* 51 (1974), 171–97. See also: A. Adnès and P. Canivet, "Guérisons miraculeuses et exorcismes dans l'Histoire Philothée," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 171 (1967), 53–82, 149–79. There is, finally Pierre Canivet, *Le Monachisme syrien selon Theodoret de Cyr* (Paris 1977). The analysis which follows in the next section owes relatively little to the previous scholarship.

[272] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 2, Pl. XXXIX. *V. Symeonis* 2 (Hilgenfeld, 80).

Shemshi ("Like the Sun") received a rich legacy from their aunt that perhaps consisted of arable land,[273] but they both elected to pursue asceticism instead. It cannot be excluded that part of the family line had descended from Arabs who wintered with their flocks on the leeward side of the Amanus range and intermarried with the agriculturalists living outside Nikopolis in the valley of the present-day Kara Su river. Such a supposition is consistent with Symeon's religious experiences and with the diverse modes of *Ritenchristianisierung* that he invented in a synthesis of Arabic and Syriac cultural forms. This will be seen in due course. Symeon spent the first five years of his monastic career at the convent of St. Eusebona, which accomodated about 120 monks in the late fourth century.[274] He later migrated southward through Cyrrhus to a mountain top in the Limestone Massif east of Antioch that eventually came to be called Djebel Sim'ān. He enjoyed close relations with the Christian clergy and populace of a nearby village called Telneshil (in Syriac) or Telanissos (in Greek) from 409 onward.[275] The monastery built around the site of Symeon's ascetic endeavors dated from 413. Symeon at first stood in a corner of the enclosure, but later mounted columns of increasing height, steles of eleven, seventeen, and twenty-two feet. The last thirty years of his career between 430–460 were spent atop a forty-foot column.[276] The standing space at the tip is said to have been only one foot wide.[277]

The important pagan temenos had for centuries been the shrine of Zeus Madbachos, the local Baal, high atop Djebel Sheikh Berekat.[278] By the time of Symeon's arrival at Telanissos in 409, many of the villages in the immediate vicinity had begun to accept Christianity. With some few exceptions in the Dana plain, the villages of the Limestone Massif had gone over to the new religion by c. 425.[279] There are no specific references to local pagan villages in the Syriac life of Symeon, and this picture is borne out by the epigraphy.[280] Such of them as converted to Christianity in later years are covered by generalities:[281]

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[273] *V. Symeonis* 11 (Hilgenfeld, 86f.).

[274] *V. Symeonis* 11 and 22 (Hilgenfeld, 86f., 92).

[275] The date is computed by the local era of Antioch. *V. Symeonis* 24 (Hilgenfeld, 93).

[276] *V. Symeonis* 116 (Hilgenfeld, 162).

[277] *V. Symeonis* 83 (Hilgenfeld, 130). Some discrepancies of chronology exist in the Syriac text. This issue is not central to the present discussion.

[278] Infra, Ch. X, Sect. 1.

[279] Infra, Ch. X, Sect. 1–4.

[280] Infra, Ch. X, Sect. 1.

[281] *V. Symeonis* 56 (Hilgenfeld, 108).

> How many barbarians, Armenians, Urtaeans, and pagans, and peoples of all tongues came in constantly and received baptism in large groups day after day, and became acquainted with the living God!

This rule applied particularly to Arabs, as was seen in the previous section of this chapter. Remnants of the apparatus of conversion are still attested, however, as for example in the work of *periodeutai* in the villages that did not yet have permanent churches with presbyters and deacons.[282] Nearby Telanissos had at least one presbyter, named Daniel, by c. 409.[283] The Syriac life of Symeon is perfectly consistent with with the epigraphic evidence, which suggests the nearly complete Christianization of the Limestone Massif between 370–425.[284]

The social and economic picture of the district as described in the Syriac life of Symeon is consistent with that in the epigraphy. At Telanissos, an executive committee of three headmen, Marinis, Demetrianos, and Maris, presided over the village council.[285] The production of olive oil was an important feature of the economy,[286] a fact stressed by G. Tchalenko in his study of the material culture of the Limestone Massif.[287] Symeon's native village had a population of c. 400 men and women,[288] giving it perhaps an overall population of 700, making it quite typical.[289] No such figures are given for Telanissos. The present-day Kara Su river, which ran not far from Şiş, seems to have provided considerable supplies of fresh water fish, for one could support a family on the living it provided.[290] The pagan Isaurians disrupted local economic life by raiding Şiş on at least one occasion.[291] In consequence, fortifications were constructed there and a detachment of soldiers guarded them. Two of these men, Silvanus and Bar Shabta, had families with them, and so must have belonged to a muster of *limitanei* or landed militia.[292] They will thus not have injected much specie into the local economy. Camels were the common beasts of burden at both Şiş and elsewhere, even for the Syrian villagers.[293] A pagan Arab trader from a place called Seba once visited Symeon at Djebel Sim'ān, and resided there with five slaves for an entire year, evidently bringing enough capital with him to make the visit worthwhile both financially and religiously. He ultimately accepted Christian baptism.[294] All this suggests the existence of a year-round bazaar at the monastery. It was this economic milieu that confronted the pagan Arabs and Syrian villagers when they came in from their respective abodes for healing and sustenance.

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[282] *V. Symeonis* 98 (Hilgenfeld, 144), referring to Gindarus in First Syria. Cf. the example of a certain Bassus, who came from the parts of Edessa in Osrhoene. *V. Symeonis* 26, 27 (Hilgenfeld, 94–96).

[283] A second presbyter is attested not long after this. *V. Symeonis* 26, 38 (Hilgenfeld, 95, 99).

[284] Infra, Ch. X, passim.

[285] *V. Symeonis* 27, 53 (Hilgenfeld, 95, 105).

[286] *V. Symeonis* 27 (Hilgenfeld, 95).

[287] Infra, Ch. X, prooem.

[288] *V. Symeonis* 7 (Hilgenfeld, 84).

[289] For the demography of rural villages in Late Antiquity, see the author's note in Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 330f. and n. 25.

[290] *V. Symeonis* 8 (Hilgenfeld, 83f.). One fisherman had a daughter named Maria. One night's catch weighed well above the three pounds that Symeon asked for.

[291] *V. Symeonis* 7 (Hilgenfeld, 83f.).

The flora, fauna, and climate of the Telanissos district corresponded closely to that of the nearer deserts where the pagan Arabs made their encampments, and in bygone times cut the Safaitic inscriptions, relating their longings for kith and kin, cursing their enemies by calling upon Allāt for vengeance, and describing visions. Although at best a sedentary Arab, Symeon well knew the harshness of the desert. The lethal fauna included lions, scorpions, and snakes, all of which turn up in the Safaitic texts, and more benign vermin like rats, worms, and mice, all part of the horrors of the desert.[295] Herds of gazelle, an animal hunted on the desert fringe as well, roamed near the monastery. Symeon made their tameness to being touched an object of exhortation in connection with the perversity of human will,[296] an analogy that pagan Arabs well understood from their desperate tracking of gazelle in the wilds of the desert. Symeon spoke of apparitions of *daimones* in the shape of lions,[297] and and at other times demonstrated the submission of very real killer beasts to the Christian God in front of "magic circles" furrowed around villages and having crosses pegged into the perimeter.[298] Both the fauna and the spiritual realm of the pre-Christian Arabs thus fell defanged before the holy and and the cross. It was even said that wild animals became "servants of the truth" after tamely gazing at Symeon, an amusing but improbable observation to set before those iniured to the desert.[299]

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[292] *V. Symeonis* 9 (Hilgenfeld, 86).

[293] *V. Symeonis* 13, 73 (Hilgenfeld, 87, 120).

[294] *V. Symeonis* 66 (Hilgenfeld, 114f.).

[295] *V. Symeonis* 45, 75 (Hilgenfeld, 101f., 121).

[296] *V. Symeonis* 74 (Hilgenfeld, 120f.).

[297] It comes down to us as "Satan" in the Syriac. *V. Symeonis* 43 (Hilgenfeld, 101).

[298] *V. Symeonis* 75 (Hilgenfeld, 121f.).

[299] *V. Symeonis* 54 (Hilgenfeld, 107).

The sedentary Syrians and Symeon too shared the same climatic terrors as the Arabs. Extreme heat battered the land during the Syrian month of Tammuz (July).[300] Winter rainfall was essential to village cisterns and desert wells alike. Symeon's prayer might at times avail, but the difficulty was common.[301] Perhaps the most frightening and least foreseeable event was the wadi torrent, a recurrent subject in the Safaitic inscriptions. Set off by torrential rains miles away, it often caught travellers and campers, who followed the wadis down from the plateaux and up again because of the residual water they sheltered and the gradual declivity they gave between the high escarpments. Preceded by a sudden roar, it was a deadly menace that left few survivors. The life of Symeon alludes to this danger, but does not provide a specific example.[302]

There was, finally, a certain amount of literacy in the parts around Djebel Sim'ān and further afield.[303] The Christian church was the principal locus of Greek literacy in the Limestone Massif, as the inscriptions confirm,[304] there being no Syriac inscriptions until the late fifth century.[305] We learn of a presbyter from Samosata in Euphratesia who had come to ask Symeon's prayer for a village whose well had gone dry. The man recorded the details of his conversation with Symeon in a writing tablet (πιττάκιον).[306] In another instance, Gindarus, a large Christian village in the *territorium* of Antioch, saw its spring go dry. The presbyter and *periodeutai* of the place trooped off to Djebel Sim'ān, where the stylite advised them to compose a written statement listing their sins along with the remedy of casting three small stones marked with crosses into the spring.[307] Nor was literacy confined to Christian ecclesiastics. The manager of a rural estate (ἐπίτροπος) organized some children who had been studying Greek grammar out of books to recite the "Kyrie eleeison" for the crowds that assembled at the monastery.[308] The prevailing literacy resulted in part from the requirement of olive oil producers to keep the inventories of sales to their Antiochene distributors. It was also necessary to be able to understand the imperial edicts, which were read out publicly in all the cities[309] and in the larger villages as well.[310]

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[300] *V. Symeonis* 45 (Hilgenfeld, 102).

[301] *V. Symeonis* 65 (Hilgenfeld, 113).

[302] *V. Symeonis* 73 (Hilgenfeld, 119f.).

[303] S.A. Harvey has disagreed with me on this point, but the evidence is specific and irrefutable. Oral communication, 7 April 1988.

[304] Infra, Ch. X, Sect. 1–4.

[305] *Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904–5 and 1909, Division IV: Semitic Inscriptions, Section B: Syriac Inscriptions*, ed. Enno Littmann (Leiden 1934), passim.

[306] *V. Symeonis* 72 (Hilgenfeld, 119).

[307] *V. Symeonis* 98 (Hilgenfeld, 143f.).

[308] *V. Symeonis* 109 (Hilgenfeld, 157).

This was the social, economic, and cultural milieu in which the pagan cults of the Limestone Massif were eradicated. The epigraphic evidence suggests that the main period of Christianization came between 365–425.[311] This explains why the authors of the Syriac life of Symeon refer to no nearby pagan villages between 409–460. The two that are mentioned lay quite far off. The first instance has a *terminus post quem* of 442.[312] It concerns some villages lying in Mt. Lebanon, which lies a good 200 kilometers south of Djebel Sim'ān. These places were supposedly being overrun by man-eating wild animals that were presumably lions. A large delegation of these folk gathered beneath Symeon's stele and begged for his aid.[313] They had evidently begun to despair of the "peace of the gods" after sacrifices had failed to avert the danger. The stylite called upon them to give up their "dumb idols", become members of the Christian catechumenate, and accept baptism.[314] Here once again the rural congregations "became Christian" prior to their actual baptism through the expedient of receiving a blessing and pledging to accept instruction. They reputedly petitioned Symeon in these terms:[315]

> If you will pray for us and remove the rod of anger from us, we promise and *bind ourselves in writing* before your holiness to become Christians and to accept baptism and to repudiate our idols and to destroy our temple (ναός) and to smash our images. Only let this necessity be removed from us!

The *quid pro quo* in this transaction was a fine bit of *Ritenchristianisierung* that came directly out of rural magic:[316]

> [Symeon said:] In the name of Christ take some of this blessed dust and carry it off, and bury four stones on the boundary of each village. And if there are [any Christian] presbyters there, mark three crosses on each stone and hold a nightly liturgy for three days. Then you will

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[309] *V. Symeonis* 130 (Hilgenfeld, 174).

[310] John of Ephesus, "Lives of the Eastern Saints," ed. tr. E.W. Brooks in *Patrologia Orientalis* 17 (Paris 1923), 95f. and notes. Cf. Trombley, "Religious Transition in Syria", Sect. 1, n. 44.

[311] Infra, Ch. X, Sect. 1–4.

[312] *V. Symeonis* 97 (Hilgenfeld, 140ff.).

[313] *V. Symeonis* 97 (Hilgenfeld, 140).

[314] *V. Symeonis* 97 (Hilgenfeld, 141).

[315] *V. Symeonis* 97 (Hilgenfeld, 141).

[316] *V. Symeonis* 97 (Hilgenfeld, 141f.).

> see that God performs a great sign, in order that the [animals] would never again kill a human being.

The fact of pagan villages in Mt. Lebanon at this time is of course confirmed by the epigraphy.[317] It was said that no wild beast, although many of them howled pathetically, could pass within these "magic circles" marked with the incised stones. The villagers fell upon them, killed them, and brought them to Djebel Sim'ān as a sign of victory. Christian magic was thus thought to fend off wild animals in exactly the same way as the ubiquitous *daimones* and the forces of nature. In thanksgiving for the apotropaism, a great number of villagers accepted baptism and then stayed at the monastery for a week. They continued to bring their children to Djebel Sim'ān thereafter for baptism. While some villages on Mt. Lebanon already had presbyters, new staff could not be provided for them all immediately, and hence the continuing importance of the distant monastery in the scheme of Christianization.[318] The incident provides another example of rural literacy, as found in the villagers' written pledge to overthrow their temple and household images. The animal skins and papyrus could evidently still be seen at Djebel Sim'ān some two decades after the event when the Syriac life of Symeon was composed.

The second instance of a largely or partly pagan village occurred between 413–442 in the region of Dalok.[319] It concerns an underground torrent that was forcing the earth upward into a gigantic mound that threatened the unnamed village. The incident once again embodies the use of the "magic circle" to convince the pagan rustics of the Christian God's power over the ground water, which to them still belonged to the domain of Atargatis or some other female fertility deity:[320]

> Another presbyter came from the district of Dalok. There was a mountain [caused by subterranean water] two miles from their village which crept and came closer and closer until it reached the edge of the village. One could hear the roar of a powerful water torrent beneath it like a tidal wave. In their fear, all the residents abandoned their village and fled. It was frightening to see as the mountain crept up and came closer to burying them *because they were pagans*. When they saw that disaster was inevitable and expected help from no quarter, the presbyter set out, taking the entire village along, young

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[317] Supra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 2.

[318] The "magic circle" was recommended for similar problems on at least two other occasions. *V. Symeonis* 75. 96 (Hilgenfeld, 122 and 140).

[319] Manuscript A contains the additional explanatory clause, "because they were pagans". *V. Symeonis* 73 (Hilgenfeld, 120, n. 1).

[320] *V. Symeonis* 73 (Hilgenfeld, 119f.).

> and old, and they went to the holy lord Symeon. . . . [Symeon said:] "In the name of our lord Jesus Christ, take three stones and incise three crosses on them. Go and insert them in front of the mound and hold three days' liturgy and offer sacrifice. I hope to the Lord that it will not creep any closer to your village." . . . On the third day they suddenly heard a powerful crash like thunder under the mountain, and the mountain collapsed and sank. Much water gushed from under it and inundated the entire countryside. It pleased our lord [Symeon?]. After three days all this water seeped into [the ground] and did no kind of harm. The mountain became flat as the earth and was like a plain. That year they sowed peas upon it and reaped 200 *koroi* [a Semitic unit of dry measure]. After loading some of it upon camels and beasts of burden, they brought it and distributed it in the monastery and to the poor, and gave thanks before everyone for the goodness that had been done for them.

The village was evidently situated near a spring. Another channel of ground water invaded the geologically young subterranean rock, forcing the earth upward as it passed beneath the local subsoil. The pagan rustics of the place took this geological event as a sign of the failure on their part to maintain the "peace of the gods" with the local fertility deity. In consequence, they took the presbyter's advice and availed themselves of the powers of the Christian God thought to be channeled through Symeon. All prior acts of propitiation had failed, and not even Symeon felt quite sure what was in play, expressing no more than hope that the "magic circle" would work. The incident provides a compelling example of the psychological mechanisms of "atheism"—a turning away from the local cults of the soil—that preceded conversion to the new religion. It is not entirely clear, however, that the village became immediately Christian, but only that the first fruits of the windfall harvest went to the monks at Djebel Sim'ān and the poor, a sensible decision consistent with a pre-Christian ethic.

Symeon distilled the essence of the ancient religiosity into Christianized forms. This rule applies not only to "magic circles", but also to the typologies of the Semitic divinities which not surprisingly became daimonic. The same deities often received worship from both the pastoralist Arabs and sedentary Syrians, as for example Baal-Shamīn, the propeller of rain clouds and caster of thunderbolts. Pagan Arabs made pilgrimage to his shrine at Si' in Djebel Hauran.[321] Symeon's dream visions reflect the daimonization of the ancient gods and Baal-Shamīn in particular. The vividness of these religious experiences is certain enough. Of Baal-Shamīn:[322]

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[321] Supra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 3.

[322] *V. Symeonis* 40 (Hilgenfeld, 100).

> When [Symeon] bolted the gate and was by himself, there suddenly appeared the Foe, and fought with the holy man, and began to fight with him openly. The Foe came before him in the shape of soldiers riding on horses. Their swords were drawn and their bows strung. They allowed their horses to run before the holy man impetuously.

It will be recalled that the divine triad painted in the Baal temple at Dura Europus wore armor and carried weapons.[323] Symeon's victory over the daimonic soldiers affirmed his power to eradicate the *Baalim* in armor still worshipped in some villages. These divinities or *daimones* were thought sometimes to abuse the Christian village clergy with lightning bolts, another attribute of the *Baalim*:[324]

> They brought before the holy master a presbyter from the north who lay in bitter and painful torment. For when he was sitting in the atrium of the church reading the scriptures, he saw *something like a cloud* pass him by. The evil one, the hater of mankind, struck him in the face and cast him to the ground. He lost his eyesight and all understanding. He was withered like wood, his limbs became weak, and his faculty of speech was inhibited.

Symeon claimed all rain-bearing clouds as the province of the Christian God. In times of drought the holy man summoned them for the people of the Christian villages. One witness reported:[325]

> As soon as [the child in a vision] had spoken to me and passed in front of me, I heard the thunder roll, the wind to blow, and rain to pour down in torrents. I thanked and praised God that he had not left the prayer of his servant unheeded.

The Christian God was even said to provide the ground dew.[326] In the first instance, the moving shadow of a passing cloud is conceptualized as a murky vision of a daimonic Baal that evidently cast a thunderbolt. In the second, it seems that the winter rains had failed. Special measures were needed to restore the confidence of the farmers in the Christian God lest they seek as of old to propitiate the Baals once again.[327]

Atargatis, Symbaitylos, and other chthonic fertility goddesses still survived in the folk memory. Their supposed epiphanies were reduced to daimonic manifestations. One case certainly derives from the hypnopompic hallucination of a man just prior to awakening:[328]

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[323] MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* 80f.

[324] *V. Symeonis* 76 (Hilgenfeld, 122).

[325] *V. Symeonis* 110 (Hilgenfeld, 159).

[326] *V. Symeonis* 109 (Hilgenfeld, 158).

[327] *V. Symeonis* 109 (Hilgenfeld, 156f.). As was seen in the case of Gaza, the failure of rain to come during the winter season caused a crisis of faith for the pagans of the city. Supra, Ch. III, Sect. 5.

> A man came to [Symeon] who was tormented by an evil *daimon*. Something slept in the bed beside him in the shape of a woman, and he was in consequence troubled and annoyed. When the holy man saw him, he told him: "Rub yourself with some of this in the name of Jesus Christ and make three crosses with it on your house, and you will not see her again." He did as he was told and never saw the hateful thing again to the day of his death.

The implicitly sexual content of the dream suggests a fertility deity. The cross was of course the Christian symbol par excellence to dislodge pagan divinities. Symeon himself was said to have suffered through the vision of a goddess whose typology somewhat resembles the Artemis exorcised by Hypatius of Rufinianae.[329] Her striking appearance evidently derived from a local cult effigy:[330]

> The filthy one, the malfactor and friend of torment, appeared to the holy man *at noon* in the form of a beautiful woman, while he stood in prayer. She was attired in golden vestments and adorned with splendid robes. She laughed and approached him. When the holy man saw her, he made the sign of the cross upon himself, turned around, and blew upon her in the name of Jesus Christ. She was at once in the form of an animal whose hands and feet had been cut off. She rolled over and lamented as if many persons were pursuing her, until she came to the corner of the enclosure and vanished like smoke.

Symeon is said to have concealed the content of most of his visions.[331]

The Syriac authors sum up the position of the Christian One God *vis à vis* the subdivision of the cosmos into a multiplicity of overlapping spheres that the pagan gods were in recent time thought to rule:[332]

> We all well know and are convinced that God is in all places, in the firmament and upon the earth, in the heights and in the depths, in the seas and abysses, under the earth and above the firmament. There is no place where his divinity is not, except in men who do not do his will.

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[328] *V. Symeonis* 34 (Hilgenfeld, 98). Dreams of this sort are discussed in exceptional detail from a psychoanalytic standpoint in Ernest Jones, "The Connections between the Nightmare and Certain Mediaeval Superstitions" in *On the Nightmare* (1951; repr. London 1971), 55–239.

[329] Supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 1.

[330] *V. Symeonis* 44 (Hilgenfeld, 101).

[331] *V. Symeonis* 111 (Hilgenfeld, 160).

[332] *V. Symeonis* 117 (Hilgenfeld, 163).

This thinking has something in common with the principles of monotheism expressed in the Third Novel of Theodosius II,[333] and has as its backdrop the earlier polytheistic idea of the material world as expressed in the funerary inscription of Euphemia at Panaiania in Attica.[334] The position of the old gods amidst the clouds that gathered around mountain peaks, in caves with deep chasms, and at springs whence ground waters rose and blessed the soil with their fertility were now presided over by the One God through the prayers of his holy man Symeon.

As Theodoret of Cyrrhus described it, Djebel Sim'ān became a pilgrimage site for the Arabs of the desert fringe. Many tribes and clans accepted baptism, but Theodoret fails to describe the social and economic mechanisms in play. These are laid bare in Cyril of Scythopolis' life of Euthymius.[335] But what of the cultural affinities that aided Symeon? There is, to begin with, the rather strong likelihood that he descended from a family of Arab pastoralists that had married into the Syrian peasantry outside Nikopolis in Euphratesia. If so, he will have been trilingual in Arabic, Aramaic, and Greek. His Syriac life reveals an understanding of the thought processes of pagan Arab culture and religiosity. Some of these have been noted already, as for example the occasional pilgrimage of Arabs to the temenos of Baal-Shamin at Sī' in the Djebel Hauran. We cannot exclude the possibility that Arabs of past centuries had observed pagan stylites in the Syrian temples. Symeon knew the insecure and frightening conditions of desert pastoral life: the risk of lions, heat exhaustion, the visions and illusions of divinities that came under the battering rays of the sun, divine epiphanies in dreams, the need felt by migrating clans and individuals for the protection of such divinities as Allāt, fear of armed raiders (whom Symeon experienced in early life when the Isaurians raided his village) or sudden encounters with enemies at watering places, and so forth. Symeon's steadfast nightly vigils atop the stele will have reminded them of the desperate midnight watches for friend or enemy, when the barren terrain merged with the illusions wished for and feared. Here was a man who daily endured it all. The Arabs of Theodoret's account seem to have discovered in Symeon the same terrible longing that lonely Safaitic campers felt upon seeing the inscriptions of long dead friends and relatives. At Djebel Sim'ān, as was seen, some clans nearly fell into armed combat over the issue of who should receive Symeon's blessing first. He tried to silence their clamorings with the well known insult of calling them "dogs".[336] He also knew the "camel culture" quite well, having himself as a semi-sedentary villager and pastoralist employed these useful animals. To judge from the Safaitic inscriptions and drawings, pagan Arabs spent a great deal of time and toil finding fodder, establishing titles of ownership for animals, and romanicizing the days when a man could tend his newly born camels peacefully amidst a mantle of verdure along the wadi beds of the desert fringe.

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[333] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 5.
[334] Supra, Ch. IV, Sect. 5.
[335] Supra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 2.

Symeon also practiced the curse, a device frequently attested in the Safaitic inscriptions, wherein the Arabs called down the supposedly potent wrath of their divinities, but particularly the feminine Allāt, for blood vengeance upon those who had killed friends or relatives. Allāt was also the bringer of peace to men who heeded the commands etched out on the Safaitic stones. Symeon certainly evoked peace in the relations between tribes and clans in lieu of the harsh Allāt, a transference of function that seems obvious. The curses in the name of Allāt frequently call blindness down upon the violator of burial grounds and peace for the respecter of tombs in the broadest sense. "Blindness", temporary, partial, or otherwise, must have been a common ailment in the desert. It reduced one's physical security, especially in the night hours, when it was sufficiently cool for raiders and other peace-breakers to stalk their prey, or, for example, to climb over village walls and monastic enclosures. Symeon knew the psychology of the religious curse well, a phenomenon having its roots in sedentary Syrian religion as well.[337] His curse is said to have withered the hand of the Isaurian brigand Bos,[338] but in particular to have darkened the vision of a member of a raiding band that perhaps consisted of Arabs and to have made another dumb.[339] Allāt was thought to preside over both these maladies in the Safaitic inscriptions.[340] A unrepentant brigand who went blind would be at an obvious disadvantage in his profession.

A man from the *territorium* of Beroia east of the Limestone Massif whose fields had been plundered was advised to take some of Symeon's "holy dust" and erect three crosses around his estate in a "magic circle". Violators would then receive "a blow from which there is no cure". It is said that two of the thieves died of separate causes: one of elephantiasis, the other of a torn abdomen after falling from a donkey. The third is said to have suffered from a *daimon*. Upon being approached for a cure, Symeon said: "God has taken vengeance upon you for your crimes. For that reason it was a blow without mercy."[341] Such were the penalties for transgressing one of Symeon's circles of crosses. They somewhat resemble the curses attached to pagan Arab burial sites, whose shallow barriers of stone marked the boundaries. Curses were attached in the name of some god lest anyone dismantle the tombs. Sacrilege and divine retribution thus attended the violation of sacred perimeters. The curses of Arabs and Syrians alike were designed to strike real fear into offenders against justice, but the frequency of their occurrence suggests more than a little disbelief in such sanctions.[342]

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[336] Supra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 2, n. 189.

[337] Trombley, "Religious Transition in Syria," Sect. 1.

[338] *V. Symeonis* 7 (Hilgenfeld, 84).

[339] *V. Symeonis* 48 (Hilgenfeld, 103f.).

[340] Supra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 3.

Symeon's curse directed against the Sassanid Great King because of a persecution demanded by the magian priesthood sometime before 451 was perhaps designed to inspire awe in the recently Christianized pro-Roman Arabs who lived along the eastern desert fringe. His letter to the Persian monarch, probably Yazdigird II (438–457), began with the ringing words: "So speaks Symeon, who stands upon the stele in the land of the Romans."[343] Such an aim would have been consistent with the genuine difficulty of maintaining the new congregations of Christian Arabs, for their conversion will have partly necessitated their abandoning formerly freewheeling raids designed to win much booty, in behalf of which Allāt and other divinities had been invoked. From now on their plunder would have to come from Sassanid Persia, whose western frontiers were admittedly full of Christian agriculturalists and pastoralists. Curses might thus have supported an imperial Roman policy of reducing Arab brigandage along the eastern frontier and of exporting it to Sassanid Mesopotamia.

It remains to have a look at the demographic scope of the conversions that took place at Djebel Sim'ān. Symeon's monastery evidently possessed no reliable figures for the numbers of clan and tribal members who received baptism. These migrant pastoralists paid neither the capitation tax nor the annona, and had their names recorded nowhere in village tax registers, nor did they contribute a regular tithe to the presbyter of any rural parish. In consequence, one gets the impression that they were "as number-less as the sands of the sea" from both Theodoret and the Syriac biographers of Symeon. The latter do not give such a full picture:[344]

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[341] *V. Symeonis* 77 (Hilgenfeld, 124f.).

[342] For other curses, see *V. Symeonis* 92–95 (Hilgenfeld, 135–38).

[343] *V. Symeonis* 102 (Hilgenfeld, 147–51).

> How many far-away Arabs who knew not what bread is, but fed themselves on the flesh of animals, came and saw the holy man and became catechumens and Christians, renouncing the images of their fathers and serving God! . . . The Arabs are impossible to number, [except] their kings and sheikhs, who receive baptism there and take up faith in God and profess Christ and also build churches among their tents at the command of the holy man!

The second half of the passage is given in the present tense, suggesting that new contingents of pagan Arabs continued to migrate to Symeon's monastery straight through to the late fifth century when this work was composed. They came from the outer desert, having no knowledge of the bread-baking practiced in the villages of northern Syria. Their images certainly consisted of statuettes,[345] but also included the sort of drawings that turn up at encampments like il-ʿIsāwi, where a probable picture of Allāt, the fulfiller of a curse, is depicted with arms outstretched and holding her long hair in her hands.[346] The churches built by the Arabs were probably central shrines that sedentary Christian Arab artisans constructed at the well-watered camping grounds where the pastoralists seasonally set up their tents, all this in a similar manner to the chapel erected and supervised by Euthymius and his monks in eastern Palestine.[347] These establishments enabled interested pastoralists to adopt agriculture or learn artisan skills. With this came a reduced dependence on animal meat and the consumption of grain instead in the form of bread. This is the evident socioeconomic meaning of Theodoret's observation that the Arabs "despised the meat of wild asses and camels" after their acceptance of Christianity.[348]

Direct attestations of pastoralist Arabs' views about the renunciation of polytheism and acceptance of the One God of Christianity hardly exist in the sources. The authors of the Syriac life of Symeon vouch for one such story, on the good word of Antiochus son of Sabinus, who served as the *dux*, or commander of the provincial cavalry *arithmoi*, of Phoenicia Libanensis, whose metropolis was Damascus. The conversation took place when Naʿman, a sheikh who later turned against Rome, encamped on the eastern fringe of the province and invited Antiochus to dinner. The Arab's Semitic style of speaking and religious experience are authentically transmitted:[349]

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[344] *V. Symeonis* 56 (Hilgenfeld, 108).
[345] Supra, Ch. VIII, n. 162.
[346] Supra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 3, n. 269.
[347] Supra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 2.
[348] Supra, Ch. VIII, n. 162.

> Once we were at dinner, [Na'man] brought the conversation around to Mar Symeon and asked me: "Is he whom you call Mar Symeon a god?" I answered "He is not a god, but a servant of God."
>
> Na'man said to me again: "When people among us heard of the repute of Mar Symeon, and the Arabs on our side began drawing over to him, the sheikhs of my own camp (Ḥirta) came to me and said: 'If you let them go over to him, they will do so and become Christians and depend on the Romans and become rebellious against you and desert you.' Then I sent for them and assembled the entire encampment and told them: 'If anyone has the audacity to go over to Mar Symeon, I will strike off his head with the sword and those of his entire family.' After these words I gave them the command and let them go. In the middle of the night, when I was sleeping in my tent, I saw a splendid man whose like I had never seen before, and with him there were five others. When I saw him, my courage failed and my knees quivered and I made the *prokynesis* to him out of awe. Then he spoke to me angrily with harsh words: 'Who are you to keep the people of God back from the servant of God?' Upon [the splendid man's] command the four men tied my hands and feet, and the other gave me a hard and painful chastisement, and no one delivered me from their hands until he took mercy on my [suffering] and ordered me to be released. He then drew the sword that he carried, showed it to me, and affirmed to me with terrible oaths: 'If you dare again to stop even one person from praying to God, I will strike your limbs to pieces and those of your whole family with this sword! Thereafter I got up early in the morning and asembled the entire encampment and said to them: 'Whoever wants to approach Mar Symeon in order to receive baptism and to become a Christian, he may do so without anxiety and fear.'"
>
> Na'man also said to me: "If I were not a subject of the Persian king, I too would have approached [Symeon] and have become a Christian. But I felt the fear and chastisement [of the dream-vision] for more than a month, and could not stand up and go about. Look, at my command there are churches and bishops and presbyters in my encampment, and I said: 'Whoever still wants to become a Christian may do so without anxiety; but if someone want to be a pagan, that is his affair."

Symeon Stylites the Elder's repute as a friend and advocate of the Arabs before the Christian God thus reached the lower Euphrates valley. These folk had begun to accept the new religion without the example or injunction of their phylarch or quasi-king, but eventually did so with his tacit consent. The journey from the encampment (*Ḥirta*), circa 1000 Roman miles, indicates the vast distances traversed by Symeon's Arab clients. The dream-vision seen by Na'man is not incompatible with the religious experiences reflected in the Safaitic inscriptions and drawings. Some reveal men brandishing weapons in a threatening way.[350] The "splendid man" of Na'man's dream did not identify himself as Symeon, but the bitterness of the dispute over the growing number of converts in Na'man's jurisdiction and a sense of religious awe conditioned by stories about the wonders performed by the stylite caused the Arab phylarch to identify his assailants with the Christian monk ("Is he whom you call Mar Symeon a god?"). All sorts of divinites lurked in the desert sky, but especially Allāt. Na'man simply added Symeon to his list of gods after the disruptive dream, but remained a pagan on the ground of political necessity. The intensity of the dream suggests, once again, hypnopompic phenomena.[351] The narrative shows no signs of contamination from official Roman sources, for the family and clan structure of Na'man's subjects is evident. Furthermore, the Arab leader refers to Symeon as the "servant" or "slave of God", that is 'Abd-ullah, an Arabic theophoric name.

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[349] *V. Symeonis* 101 (Hilgenfeld, 146f.).

The Syriac life of Symeon provides a typologically accurate glimpse of the varieties of Semitic religious yearnings and experiences that made Djebel Sim'ān a locus for conversions all through the fifth century. Some of the phenomena of Arabo-Aramaic religiosity expressed in this work bear a superficial resemblance to those of the Hellenic faith, such as "magic circles" and the dream epiphanies of gods and *daimones*, but these styles of defining religious awe and the need for ready apotropaic devices were deeply grounded in local Semitic culture. Symeon and his monastic disciples, as the interpreters of the new religion, translated these norms into monotheistic formularies. Otherwise Christianity would have endured great difficulty in penetrating the Syrian highlands and deserts beyond. This reality demonstrates, in turn, the problems of discovering the mechanisms of Christianization in Theodoret's treatment of Symeon, which reflects the Christian sophistic of the Hellenized cities whose literary conventions at times unconsciously distort even eyewitness testimony.

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[350] Supra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 3.

[351] It is hardly possible to account for the seeming reality of the bruises and pain felt by Na'man thereafter. On the nightmare, cf. supra, Ch. VIII, n. 328.

V. The Syrian Countryside, Christianization, and the World Beyond

Monastic settlements like Djebel Sim'ān and those of solitary Christian hermits exerted an influence beyond the local contexts of pastoralism and agriculture, Arab and Aramaean, tribe and village commune. In time monks of repute extended their work of Christianization past all cultural frontiers. This work passed inside the fortifications of the Greek cities and outside the cultural unity that constituted the so-called Fertile Crescent. More precisely, in word and deed the monks reached the non-Semitic world of Hellenes, Iranians, and even the Turkic peoples of central Asia. No survey of Christianization would be complete without a brief look at the cultural possibilities inherent in this tendency. The cultural barriers and limitations of viewpoint that affected the historical records compiled in the Syrian countryside did not prove to be impermeable to the wider world. It is hardly possible in a discussion of Christianization to deal with the full extent of the pilgrim traffic to Djebel Sim'ān, but Symeon and the aura of awe surrounding him certainly led to conversions in the cities and eastern steppe lands. Some few examples of the phenomena of intercultural conversion and the dissolution of Hellenic sorcery require notice.

Symeon's repute extended to the cities of Palestine in the years after his arrival at Telanissos in 409. We learn of a pagan city councillor from an unnamed town there who suffered from a severe degenerative dysfunction of the spine that left his head resting against his chest. The man went to Symeon only after the physicians had failed to discover a remedy and then after he had tested the powers of sorcerers to produce a cure as well.[352] His case corresponds to the "two stages of atheism", wherein men gave up on the healing powers of their gods first, turned to magic, and only then, after passing through this "second stage" of disillusionment, had recourse to the Christian God and his agents.[353] In this instance, the man sought to carry out the transaction by cash payment, but Symeon refused the offer, first requiring his acceptance of the new religion.[354] The Hellene thus looked upon the stylite as the repository of quasi-magical healing until the latter demanded a firm change of religious allegiance. This behavior was probably not atypical.

The monk Macedonius (c. 380–400) once crossed over from countryside to an unnamed city because of a case of sorcery, to wit, the supposed activity of a *daimon* in a young unmarried woman caused by the application of a magical device (μαγγανείᾳ βιασθῆναι γοητευτικῇ) to generate carnal love in her for the owner of the charm (καὶ ἔρωτα εἶναι τὴν τῆς γοητείας αἰτίαν).[355] The device was administered to the victim in the form of an herbal potion of some kind (ὁ κυκεών) after the recitation of incantations (ταῖς γοητευτικαῖς ᾠδαῖς) to compel the *daimon*. A prostitute (παιδίσκη) is said to have provided the requisite formulae.[356] It seems quite probable that the users of love charms somehow conveyed the source and "fact" of the spell to their victims, who at times responded with panic, that is, simulated states of possession by the *daimon*. In consequence, the young lady, or, according to Theodoret, the *daimon*, revealed the name of the man and the nature of the device to Macedonius when he tried to expel the "*daimon*".[357] The implementation of love charms was vigorously condemned in the imperial statutes.[358] The principals in this case seem to have been men of decurion rank, for the girl's father called in the provincial governor to hear his arguments. He also wrote to the perpetrator, who called the accusation blackmail.[359] The woman was taken to Macedonius' monastery, where the holy man pronounced the view that the *daimon* itself would be adequate as a witness. Unless we take this literally, it is clear that the young woman was considered competent to give testimony despite her psychoneurotic state. She was transferred to the *praetorium* perhaps of Antioch, where the governor sat as an observer while Macedonius conducted the interrogation. Regular procedure was allowed to lapse in the interest of establishing the truth, with the woman unable to communicate except with the monk. Making use of "the indwelling faculty" (τῇ ἐνοικούσῃ δυνάμει), the holy man extracted the relevant facts for the public record. The *daimon* in question is said to have admitted its activity in other sorceries, including the destruction of one man's house, another man's beasts of burden, and much else.[360] The woman in all probability already knew something about the perpetrator's past acts of criminal magic, for the decurion class of most smaller cities formed quite a restrictive social, economic, political and cultural circle. After these testimonies were given, Macedonius expelled the *daimon* from the woman and *from the city* (καὶ παραυτίκα πόρρω που καὶ τῆς κόρης καὶ τοῦ ἄστεως γίνεσθαι).[361] This exorcism symbolized the expulsion not only of the *daimones* of magic, but also of the recategorized or "falsely named gods" of Hellenic religion from the urban zones where the temples had been closed or demolished, out into the *territoria* or deserts beyond, where the pagan rustics had continued up to this time to sacrifice to the gods of sky and soil. Put another way, the countryside was seen as the abode of the pre-Christian ethos with all its divinites, including the *daimones* of magic except where the monks had set up Christian shrines, but the *polis* had become a free zone where the new religion should of necessity always prevail.

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[352] *V. Symeonis* 64 (Hilgenfeld, 112).

[353] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 5, and Ch. III, Sect. 2.

[354] *V. Symeonis* 64 (Hilgenfeld, 113).

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[355] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 13.10 (Canivet 1, 492f.).
[356] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 13.11 (Canivet 1, 494f.).
[357] Ibid.
[358] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 4.
[359] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 13.11 (Canivet 1, 492–95).
[360] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 13.11 (Canivet 1, 494f.).

The special procedure employed in this case is surprising, but our source, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, well knew how the civil courts operated. It would seem that a degree of flexibility was allowed in this case because of the peculiar circumstances: the accused party had refused to present himself and contest the charge, and so had defaulted on his defense. The statements of the "*daimon*", that is the psychoneurotic personality of the woman, therefore carried greater weight, if only because a *prima facie* case of criminal sorcery could thereby be established, even if the competence of the victim was somewhat questionable. The public confession is said to have alleviated the woman's disorder (μανία).[362] The judge imposed the death penalty on the accused. Macedonius thereupon exercised the prosecutor's right to appeal for clemency. As a monk, he cared more for the man's conversion than the strict enforcement of the sentence.[363] Theodoret fails to disclose the religious affiliation of the accused. To judge from the date of the trial c. 380–400, he and the purveyor of the love charm may have been Hellenes.[364]

Zoroastrians bent on conversion to Christianity periodically arrived at the monasteries of northern Syria. An Iranian noble called Aphraates reached the parts of Edessa between 361–378. Although well schooled in the tenets of Mazdaean theology, he accepted Christianity while still in Persia and eventually set up a hut just outside Antioch. Aphraates never learned more than a few words of Greek.[365] It is not known if he succeeded in Christianizing other migrants from Sassanid Persia whose position, like his own, had become politically untenable.

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[361] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 13.11 (Canivet 1, 494ff.).

[362] Ibid.

[363] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 13.12 (Canivet 1, 496f.).

[364] Christians nevertheless practiced sorceries. Cf. the detailed account of the accusations against Sophronius, bishop of Constantina-Tellā in Osrhoene in: Ernest Honigmann, "A Trial for Sorcery on August 22, A.D. 449," *Isis* 35 (1944–45), 281–84. E. Peterson argued that this incident was merely a *topos* in "Die geheimen Praktiken eines syrischen Bischofs," *Frühkirche, Judentum und Gnosis* (Freiburg 1959), 333–45. H. Drijvers rejects this preposterous thesis out of hand in "The Persistence of Pagan Cults in Christian Syria," *East of Byzantium*, 40.

One of the Persian Great Kings, perhaps Yazdigird II (438–457), sent an embassy to discover more about Symeon Stylites the Elder. It may have sought to ascertain what precisely explained the devotion of many Syrian Christians inside the Sassanid realm to this Roman monk, as Yazdigird was particularly anxious to stop the flow of converts to this foreign religion. Be that as it may, his wife, who may have been a Syrian Christian, requested an ampulla of oil with Symeon's portrait on it. This act led to many denunciations by the Mazdaean clergy (παρὰ τῶν μάγων).[366] Symeon's monastic disciples collected many stories about the persecution of Christians by Sassanid noble families.[367] It is said that a Christian *chorepiskopos* visited Symeon and secured the cure of a Sassanid royal prince from paralysis after the Mazdaean priesthood's attempts at this had failed. In this instance the young man was allowed to accept baptism.[368] Such personal consideration depended on the attitude of the reigning monarch.[369]

A group of people whose point of origin and ethnic character are unknown arrived at Djebel Sim'ān and asked for baptism. They had travelled overland, probably from the parts east of Transoxiana, having been in transit for thirteen months.[370] Their travelling kit struck the onlookers as unusual. Their claim to having travelled the great distance without deviation suggests that they were experienced steppe traders or nomads. Some of them were suffering from a skin disorder taken to be leprosy and others had "evil spirits". They will in all probability have been practitioners of the shamanistic rituals of central Asia.[371] Symeon's cure induced them to accept baptism. It is unknown what happened to them after this.

Djebel Sim'ān thus became a mecca for urban Hellenes and ethnically diverse pagans. The reports of Symeon's monastery, like those of the monks' huts that lay scattered all through Syria and Palestine, turned these places into the focal points of cures, miraculous dream-visions, and states of religious exaltation, all of them interpreted in light of the different non-Christian native cultures from which the pilgrims had sprung. The monastic phase of Christianization in northern Syria affected all the ethnic groups that passed along the Roman roads between Antioch, Apamea, and the desert fringe.

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[365] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 8.1–2 (Canivet 1, 372ff.).
[366] Theodoret, *Hist. Phil.* 26.20 (Canivet 2, 200ff.).
[367] *V. Symeonis* 102, 154 (Hilgenfeld, 147–51, 154f.).
[368] *V. Symeonis* 67 (Hilgenfeld, 115).
[369] See J. Bury's brief discussion, LRE 2 1–5.
[370] *V. Symeonis* 69 (Hilgenfeld, 116f.).
[371] Menander Protector, Fr. 20 in *Historici Graeci Minores*, ed. L. Dindorf, 2 (Leipzig 1971), 50.

VI. Conclusions

The Christianization of the Syrian countryside is of archetypal significance for understanding that process elsewhere. This is partly a consequence of the abundantly detailed narrative sources and numerous dated inscriptions which permit analysis down to the village level. It is thus possible to set up a rudimentary chronology and to assess the demographic character of the transition in Syria, which was typical of that found in other regions in certain respects. This rule applies to rural Asia Minor, where the primary period of Christianization ran c. 350–450 and where a bilingual population existed in districts where Phrygian, Cappadocian, and even Iranian were still spoken,[372] just as bilingualism in Greek and Aramaic remained an important feature of Syrian rural culture until the early sixth century. The Christian liturgies of Syria seem to have been marginally more "Christianized" than those of Anatolia by this time, but the divergences are not great.

One significant difference between these two regions was the fact that, whereas Asia Minor saw little linguistic change except in the direction of Hellenization, Syria met with a constant influx of Arab tribes and clans that traded with the peasantry and whose members on occasion took up agriculture and artisan skills. The entry of Arabs into the Syrian countryside went hand in hand with Hellenization and Christianization. Even so, Symeon Stylites the Elder seems to have adapted his catechetical methods to the world-view of Arab pastoralist culture, a subject on which he was well-informed, having probably descended from ethnically Arab parents himself. This situation, coupled with contacts with Iranians and even Turks from central Asia, gave the Christianization of Syria a cosmopolitan character missing from the central plateau of Asia Minor. It will be seen that the Egyptian peasantry had a much more inward-turning view of religious life that also called for special methods when the new religion was introduced.

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[372] Supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 2 and 5.

CHAPTER NINE

THE NILE VALLEY FROM CANOPUS TO PHILAE

The first stages of Christianization in Egypt followed a course similar to that elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean areas. The new religion took root at the great metropolis of Alexandria by the end of the first century and gradually spread to the smaller cities of the Nile basin. It must be remembered that the catechetical school of Alexandria, where Clement and Origen gave shape to the Christian sophistic as a definitive movement, was oriented to an urban population and had no influence whatsoever on the spread of Christianity to the *territoria* of the cities.[1] The evidence for its presence in the Nilotic towns before 324 lies largely in the appearance of papyrus fragments of New Testament codices, although the provenance of these texts is often unknown. The earliest of these is *P. Rylands 457* (perhaps as early as the last decade of the first century), along with other texts of third-century date.[2]

A critical turning point was reached with the closure of the Serapeum of Alexandria in 391, for from that time onward the Christian patriarch, his clergy, and the monks pursued a systematic campaign against the rural temples of the Nile basin. From this time onward, the Christianization of rural Egypt followed a chronologically similar course to that in most of the other districts of the Roman East. Roger Rémondon has summed all this up with brevity:[3]

> It is quite difficult, and impossible without a degree of doubt, to estimate the real force of Christianity in the Nile valley at the beginning of the fifth century. It was assuredly considerable, nor can we deny that in the second century Christianity had already become manifest in Egypt with some force, nor that there were at this time active groups of Christians. But even late in the third century these groups did not make up more than a weak minority: the new religion

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[1] The earliest history of the Alexandrian see is conveniently reported in Bigg, *Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, 63–73. On the origins of the catechetical school, see for example: Francesco Pericoli-Ridolfini, "Le origini della scuola di Alessandria," *Rivisti degli studi orientali* 37 (1962), 211–230.

[2] Bruce M. Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible* (Oxford 1981), 62–69.

[3] Roger Rémondon, "L'Egypt et la suprême résistance au christianisme (V^{e}–VIII^{e} siècles), "*Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie, Cairo* 51 (1952), 67f.

> spread slowly in the countryside. In the epoch of Constantine, paganism probably kept its numerical superiority. It does not thus seem permissible to argue that Christians were dominant in Egypt and that their religion was "triumphant": for it is dangerous to put one's trust in the negative testimony of the papyri to assess the decline of paganism in a time when discretion was a rule of prudence. It was hardly until the end of the fourth century that Christianity became manifest as a powerful phenomenon. . . . In Egypt, the first affirmation of the force of Christianity may well have been the destruction of the Serapeum of Alexandria in 391; it was the signal, in any case, for the harsh struggle of the fifth century from which the new religion emerged triumphant, but in which paganism also survived.

Rémondon goes on to show that the critical years in the religious transition were 400–450.[4]

This is not to say that the new religion failed to penetrate the countryside at all before 391. Seemingly crypto-Christian documents are always turning up, as for example a recently published letter of unknown provenance (3rd–4th c.).[5] It is nevertheless clear that the examples of rural paganism discussed below are not exceptions to some arbitrary rule. For every group that abandoned its village and migrated into the desert with its idols, there were others that stayed and resisted persecution.[6] Several striking examples of resistance to Christianization emerge in the sources from the period c. 450–489, and these speak for many otherwise unknown local contexts submerged by want of evidence from the eye of historical inquiry. It is unfortunately not feasible to give rural Egypt the detailed demographic and chronological interpretation done for northern Syria and the Provincia Arabia because of an almost complete lack of datable inscriptions.

The evidence for Egypt suggests conditions in the countryside parallel to those in Asia Minor and Syria-Palestine. Although the indigenous population of the Nile valley generally spoke Coptic, the population of the towns and the educated elements in the villages were all Hellenized to a great degree, as the tax records, wills, and letters in the papyrological collections indicate.[7] The Christianization of the countryside in Egypt too fell to the monks, who appealed to the rustics' sense of outrage at their economic exploitation by the landed magnates and possibly to their sense of ethnic differentiation as Copts from the landlords, who were often Hellenes in religion as well as culture.[8] The fullest record of the religious transformation occurs in the writings of Shenute of Atripe, and in the life of Shenute written by his disciple Besa.[9] A later stage of Christianization is reflected in Zachariah of Mytilene's life of Severus:[10] by the late fifth century many villages even within walking distance of Alexandria were only nominally Christian. These conditions stand in sharp contrast, in turn, to those at Philae, a town on the Upper Nile close to the imperial frontier, where an ethnically Egyptian priesthood continued to practice the cults of the Nilotic deities publicly, despite the existence of a Christian bishop and churches there.[11]

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[4] Rémondon, "Résistance au christianisme" 68f.

[5] G.H. Horsley, *Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* 2 (Macquarie 1982), no. 103.

[6] Rémondon, "Résistance au christianisme" 74.

[7] For some convenient examples, see: *Select Papyri I: Private Affairs* and *II: Official Documents*, ed. tr. A.S. Hunt and C.C. Edgar (London 1932–34).

I. Shenute of Atripe and the Cults of the Middle Nile Valley

Shenute, as the son of a wealthy farmer of the village of Shenalolet in the *territorium* of the city (ΠΟΛΙC) of Shmin, knew the basics of farming and the propitiatory rites connected with the agricultural cycle.[12] His economic status enabled him to acquire an education in Greek grammar and literature—the *paideia*—which he cites or alludes to occasionally. Among the texts known to Shenute were the *Birds* and *Frogs* of Aristophanes, and the Platonic dialogues.[13]

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[8] This is the obvious inference from the work of Ioannes Leipoldt, *Schenute von Atripe und die Entstehung des national ägyptischen Christentums* (Texte und Untersuchungen 25, Leipzig 1903). The Marxist analysis presented by G.E.M. Ste Croix has particular relevance to the Egyptian context in *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (London 1981), 446f. Citations from Shenute's works given below derive from the translations of H. Wiesmann, *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* 96, 108, 129 (Scriptores Coptici 8, 12, 41, Louvain 1931–51). Individual volumes are cited below. See also: *Oeuvres de Chenoudi*, ed. tr. E. Amélineau, 2 v. (Paris 1907–11).

[9] Besa, *Sinuthii Vita Boairice*, tr. Hermann Wiesmann (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 129, Scriptores Coptici 16, Louvain 1951), and *Sinuthii Archimandritae Vita et Opera III*, tr. H. Wiesmann (CSCO, Scr. Coptici, Ser. 2, v. 4, Paris 1931). Cf. Geffcken, *Last Days of Greco-Roman Paganism*, 238f.

[10] Infra, Ch. IX, Sect. 2.

[11] Infra, Ch. IX, Sect. 3–4.

[12] Besa, *Vita Sinuthii* 3 (Wiesmann, 1).

[13] Leipoldt, *Schenute von Atripe* 71. A Coptic version of Plato's *Republic* has turned up in the Nag Hammadi library dating from the mid-fourth century A.D. or earlier. The translation is characterized by erroneous readings, misunderstanding of Platonic language, and ignorance of context. One cause of the alienation between the Hellenic towns where the landed magnates lived and the Christian Coptic population of the *territoria* thus lay in a fundamental inability even of bilingual Copts to draw correct inferences about the nature of Hellenic high culture. Louis Painchaud, *Fragment de la République de Platon* (Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi: Section "Textes" 11, Quebec 1983), 109–161 (*Republic* 5886–58896).

Shenute's links with high and popular culture enabled him to enter the towns and carry out his programme there as well. Shenute's most dramatic act in this connexion was the conversion of the temple of Pan at the village of Pleuit. The incident is the subject of two chapters in Besa's biography and of two sermons by Shenute himself. Let us consider these texts in turn.

Besa's straightforward account indicates that word of Shenute's intention to cleanse the temple at Pleuit leaked out while he was en route. The pagans of Pleuit, among whom there were makers of charms, emplanted some of these devices under the road to forestall the monk's entry into their village. These objects consisted of curses written on papyri and materials which the hagiographer calls "drugs" or "poisons" (ΦΑΡΜΑΓΙΑ) thought to be activated by an incantation.[14] The formulae, both literary and chemical, were got from magic books either in the temple archive or by some local sorcerer, who may have read them in either Greek, Coptic, or even the demotic Egyptian tongue.[15] The villagers inserted the curses in vases, dug shallow trenches in the roadway, and implanted the objects there. It was considered standard technique to install a charm such that the intended would step on it.[16] Shenute was either warned of this, or else surmised this as the Pleuitiotes' most probable reaction to his coming. It was probably considered sound strategy for the curse-maker to notify his victim somehow to create emotional stress and thereby to deter him.[17] The efficacy of charms belonged more to the psychological world than the material, and it was better for sorcerers if the material potency of their devices was never tested empirically. At any rate, Shenute, as something of a rationalist, walked up the road, and later circulated an amusing animal story about his success for the edification of his rustic congregation:[18]

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[14] Besa, *Vita Sinuthii*, Cap. 83 (Wiesmann, 23).

[15] *The Demotic Magical Papyrus of London and Leyden*, ed. Francis Ll. Griffith and H. Thompson (London 1904).

[16] On the supposed necessity of the victim of the charm making physical contact with this object, there is an example from Sicily (8th c. A.D.). The exorcists supposedly got the *daimon* of the spell to admit this: "A certain young man who wished to take her in marriage went to a certain sorcerer in Sicily who lived in a place called Marathodae. He made a solemn oath with me [the *daimon*] and bound me to a fig leaf, brought it and cast it into the road. When the young woman went to the bath and stepped on it involuntarily, the same bond entered into her, and I began to play with her and shake her." *Acta M. Anastasii Persae* (BHG 84), ed. Hermann Usener (Bonn 1894), 16.

[17] Oral communication, David R. Jordan, who has made unpublished materials available to me and discussed his findings. See, for example, his "Defixiones from a Well near the Southwest Corner of the Athenian Agora," *Hesperia* 54 (1985), 205–255. The social context of these documents still requires thorough study.

> Shenute dismounted his ass, but when he began to lead it forward on the road, however many times the ass came through to the place where the magic devices (*pharmagia*) were buried, it stood still and scraped with its hooves. At once the magic devices appeared, and Shenute ordered a boy: "Collect them, that you might hang them from their neck." As many times as the boy who accompanied him prodded the ass, Shenute told him: "Leave him [the ass] alone! For he knows what he is doing." Again Shenute told the boy: "Lift the vessels [containing the magic devices] and restrain him with the hand while we enter the village, and let us hang the magic devices from their neck." The pagans saw him entering the village and the magic vessels carried in the hands of the boy. At once they fled and vanished. Father Shenute entered the temple and smashed the idols which had been cast down one after the other.

Shenute's ass had, as it were, a more acute sense for the hidden instruments of the sorcerers than most Christian rustics!

Besa's account of this incident is suggestive in one respect and disappointing in another. Whatever the prevalence of sorcerers and their magic devices in the Christianized towns, the pagan villagers and hierophants of Pleuit found them a ready expedient to the holy man's coming. The subculture of sorcerers and magic books belonged, it would seem, as much to the rural pagan ethos as it did to the cosmopolitan, syncretistic modes of great cities like Constantinople and Alexandria. Besa's datum is of great significance. On the negative side, the hagiographer has little to say about the temple and cults of Pleuit. He observes simply: "Father Shenute entered the temple and smashed the idols which were cast down one after the other."[19] We shall see what images and liturgical furnishings a rural Egyptian temple might have in due course, as described in Zachariah of Mytilene's life of Severus.[20]

Besa did not bother to treat the upshot of this idol-smashing foray, probably because Shenute had himself set it forth in the sermon entitled "On the Idols of the Village Pleuit".[21] These documents, presented as transcriptions of Shenute's words, suggest a different course of events and one more credible than that recorded by Besa, to wit, that Shenute led the Christian rustics in an attack on Pleuit. Shenute's words preserve the tenor of an argument that Copts in isolated hamlets must have heard often during the era of Christianization. It is phrased with rhetorical violence, categorically denies the power of the Nilotic deities, and plays upon the anxiety of town and village dwellers over the timely arrival of the Nile flood, which, as popular credence had it, depended on the peace of the gods acquired through the traditional propitiatory rites.

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[18] Besa, *Vita Sinuthii*, Cap. 84 (Wiesmann, 23).

[19] Ibid.

[20] Infra, Ch. IX, Sect. 2.

[21] Shenute, *Opera* (CSCO 96: Scriptores Coptici, Ser. 2, vol. 4), 47–50.

Shenute received a summons to appear at the *officium* of the *dux* at Antinoe on the day he smashed the idols at Pleuit. The plaintiffs were the priests of the temple of Pan.[22] The prologue to the first sermon reveals that many Christians had participated in the action and were now under indictment.[23] Shenute had shrewdly timed the raid on the temple to coincide with an unusual failure of the Nile flood to rise to sufficient height to inundate all the nearby fields, which had been sown sometime before. Shenute affirmed before the magistrates and priests of Pan that the Christian God had withheld sending the waters over the plain "because of our sins". This argument appealed to the assembled crowd, which had driven to Antinoe in waggons from the surrounding villages and estates (*ex multis vicis multisque coloniis*)—men and women standing around the *officium* shouting "Iesu! Iesu!"—to support their local hero the monk. Their presence offered Shenute the occasion to deliver a withering attack on the old cults and their supposed efficacy. The proceedings thus became a sort of anti-trial, whose object was less the legal vindication of Shenute's actions than rallying the rustics to the new religion.[24] The Copts, many of them *coloni* and all of them resentful of the fiscal apparatus controlled by the civil bureaucracy and of the rents collected by the magnates who owned the temple lands, would achieve a new sense of solidarity from this, particularly with any backsliders among them who doubted the new religion. Shenute was, in fact, practicing a form of aggressive civil disobedience. He appealed to the Copts rather than the magistrates for judgement. Imprisonment for temple-bashing was, of course, out of the question because the case would certainly reach the ears of the coemperors Theodosius II (408–450) and his colleague, not to mention the patriarch of Alexandria Cyril (412–444), who on short notice could mobilize the sailors of the grain fleet and thousands of monks, and send them to Antinoe.[25]

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[22] Ibid., 47 and 50.

[23] Ibid., 47.

[24] On the anti-trials of revolutionaries, which sought to reverse the process and put the tribunal itself under the scrutiny and judgement of public opinion, see: *The Great Purge Trial*, ed. Robert C. Tucker and Stephen F. Cohen (New York 1965), xl–xlviii, but esp. xliii.

Shenute sought to discredit the old cults and their adherents, but in particular the "idolatrous priests" of Pan.[26] The apparatus of their cult is well attested:[27]

> And the plunder [from the temple] which you [the priests] say we divided, behold, we have kept with us from our god Pan, whose mind is similar to their stink because of its harshness, and similar to the sword by which they kill and consume what God has procreated [the sacrificial animals], and by the scroll full of all the magic arts and on to the idols and all else which they are accustomed to offer them, and the vessel full of bread and all the first-fruits (ⲀⲠⲀⲢⲬⲎ) and candelabrum . . . But cares come to me in great number, since I wish to see to these sanguinary people who cannot be satisfied even with the crimes committed against the Christian people with every perverse device.

The Pleuitiotes at least partly attributed the success of the Nile flood to their Pan. Shenute had, since youth, resisted the riverine cults. One can hardly otherwise interpret his practice of immersing himself up to the neck in an irrigation canal during the Egyptian month of Tybos and praying with his hands in the orant position.[28] In the hearing at the *officium* of the *dux*, Shenute cited Psalm XVII.14–16 as proof that the Christian God, and not the Nilotic deities, had sent the Nile flood: "Springs of water appear, and the foundations of the world are revealed." The holy man could not resist adding texts which expressing the *daimones'*—that is of pagan gods like the Egyptian Pan—fear of the Christian God.[29] Shenute moreover vilified the Pleuitiotes' cult practices and proclaimed his own programme:[30]

> You need not fear, for I do not hide in concealment. I fight against magicians, poisoners, interpreters of hours, those who make calculations on the basis of the stars of heaven, and idol-worshippers.

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[25] Shenute observes: "Even if you finally submit to the emperors, you do not fear and understand God. I'll make sure that you understand them, those emperors who subjected you to the church and to its illuminator, our most holy father and witness Cyril. Otherwise, the sword will extinguish the greater number of you, and the rest will go abroad." *De Idolis Vici Pneueit II* in *Opera*, 50. It is of comparative interest that the pagan decurions of Alexandria and Gaza retired from their cities after the closure and destruction of the Serapeum (391) and Marneion (402) respectively. Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 3 and Ch. III, Sect. 4, note 121.

[26] Shenute, *De Idolis Pneueit II*, 47.

[27] Ibid., 50. This passage describing the instruments of cult ends with a lacuna.

[28] Besa, *Vita Sinuthii* (Wiesmann, 2).

[29] Shenute, *De Idolis Pneueit II*, 48.

[30] Ibid., 50.

The magic devices allegedly implanted in the road to Pleuit have already been noted, and the other cult practices are certain in light of the magical papyri thus far discovered.[31] Shenute rejected the claim of the Pleuitiotes that "we pay our taxes":[32] the coemperors had already subjected them to the church and its illuminator Cyril. Finally, Shenute revived the Gnostic expressions "sons of darkness and gloom" for the pagan inhabitants of Pleuit, and "sons of light" for the Christian rustics.[33] The possibility cannot be excluded that Gnostic texts such as those discovered in the Nag Hammadi library circulated in Shenute's group.[34] Shenute may well have gotten some of his knowledge of Plato, for example, from a Coptic translation like a fragment of the *Republic* found at Nag Hammadi.[35]

The upshot of the hearing at Antinoe is unknown, but a legal judgement can hardly have been laid against Shenute for the reasons enumerated above. The documents related to the Pleuit incident demonstrate that, during the archiepiscopate of Cyril of Alexandria, the pagan temple priesthoods vigorously maintained their cults against the monastic opposition, albeit with the half-hearted support of the civil government, which apparently tolerated Shenute's antics in the hearing room. The extent of popular backing for the old cults is unknown. The holy man and his biographer Besa claimed in this instance the rising of a universally Christian peasantry in behalf of Shenute, but this can hardly be more than Shenutian propaganda. It is difficult to doubt the existence of unconverted freeholders and *coloni* near and on the temple lands at Pleuit, for whose conversion the monks concocted the entire affair.

The incident at Pleuit belonged to a wider campaign of overthrowing the cults of the middle Nile valley.[36] Another sermon of Shenute entitled "On the Injuries Done to Shenute" mentions that the people of Atripe, where the holy man's White Monastery lay, burned down the village temple.[37] The magistrates at Antinoupolis and Hermopolis haled large numbers of the Christian incendiaries into court at the request of the temple priests.[38] The sermon also refers to an incident in Coptos, whence the idols were dragged away. The text has a lacuna at this point, but indicates that seven monks and perhaps Shenute himself were involved in some way.[39] Finally, Shenute's letter "On the *Dux* Theodosius" mentions an action against the cults and possibly the temple of Kronos at Panopolis, which lay on the east bank of the Nile opposite Atripe.[40] This Kronos was probably a hellenized version of the Egyptian Petbe,[41] but the Graeco-Roman Saturn-Kronos is also attested.[42] In this last instance Shenute was brought before the magistrates and the *dux* Theodosius, but escaped without penalty and with a certain sense of glee. Shenute asserts that the summons came only because Theodosius had received a bribe. The pagan landowners thus retained a considerable influence with imperial officials, many of whom remained Hellenes in the mid-fifth century, and kept firmly entrenched with their cults.[43]

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[31] A vast array of these texts is collected in *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, ed. Karl Preisendanz *et al.*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart 1973–74). A study of their social context is for the present a desideratum.

[32] Shenute, *De Idolis Pleueit II*, 50.

[33] Ibid., 49.

[34] The cartonnage of the Nag Hammadi texts suggests provenance from, and their use by, the Pachomian monastic community. James E. Goehring, "New Frontiers in Pachomian Studies," *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, ed. B.A. Pearson and J.E. Goehring (Philadelphia 1986), 248ff.

[35] Supra, Ch. IX, note 13.

[36] Cf. F. Van Der Meer and Christine Mohrmann, *Atlas of the Early Christian World*, tr. M.F. Hedlund and H.H. Rowley (London 1958), Map 17.

[37] Shenute, *De Iniuriis Sinuthii* in *Opera*, 51f.

The outcome of these separate incidents was, in all probability, the same as that at Pleuit—the temples perhaps recovered some of their plundered statuary and service vessels, but, apart from this, the priests will have made repairs at their own expense and can hardly have recovered their magical texts, which the monks certainly burned. Little could be seized as compensation from a patriarchally protected institution of the stature of the White Monastery. If Shenute's resultant prestige grew among the Christian rustics in the zone of the middle Nile valley because of this, and even if he gained many new converts for the Christian God, there is conversely no evidence whatever to suggest that the cults of Isis, Pan-Min, Kronos-Petbe, and the other deities had vanished along this stretch of the river, which extends some 300 kilometers.[44]

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[38] Ibid., 51.

[39] Ibid., 52.

[40] Supra, Ch. IX, note 36.

[41] Leipoldt, *Schenute von Atripe*, 176.

[42] There was a dismantled temple of Kronos not far from the fifth milestone of Alexandria in Egypt (late 6th c.), not far from where criminals were executed. A murderer about to be executed is said to have taken an oath in the name of the Greek deities when asked in what direction he wished to face upon being gibbeted. The man reputedly said: "By Sarapis, make me face Kronos," a reference to the temenos. Being a resident of Alexandria, the offender probably had the Greek Kronos in mind. John Moschus, *Pratum Spirituale*, PG 87, 2924D–2925A. Moschus calls the man, who was evidently a Hellene, a *kosmikos*. The Hellenic Kronos is not noted in H.I. Bell, "Popular Religion in Graeco-Roman Egypt I: The Pagan Period," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 34 (1948), 82–97. On questions of syncretism and purely Hellenic gods, see 84–89. There is a useful sequel of this article: B.R. Rees, "Popular Religion in Graeco-Roman Egypt II: The Transition to Christianity," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 36 (1950), 86–100. Bonneau, *La Crue du Nil*, does not touch on Kronos-Saturn.

[43] Cf. the decurions of Aphrodisias. Supra, Ch. VI, Sect. 1–2, and Ch. V, Sect. 4.

Shenute found the position of the pagan landed aristocracy which held the priesthoods intolerable, but well-nigh unassailable in view of the local imperial officials' support for them. Rousing the Copts and their monastic allies had proved to be an effective method of weakening the grip of the temples. Shenute's arsenal contained other weapons as well, including epistolography. The letter "on the *Dux* Theodosius" has been mentioned. Shenute wrote two other such works, both of them entitled "Against Kronos," who was probably a pagan priest, the name Kronos perhaps being pseudonymous.[45] The audience of these epistles was clearly intended to be much wider than the addressee. In the first letter to Kronos, Shenute hurls invective, curse and insult at the man, whom he accuses of practicing the magic arts—a common skill among the Egyptian priesthoods, as we have seen—and of claiming to exert control over the Nile fertility cycle, a function of his supervision of the rites.[46] Kronos practiced the cult of his namesake, Kronos-Petbe,[47] and so perhaps superintended the temple which Shenute destroyed at Panopolis.[48] The second letter provides the history of an acrimonious exchange between Shenute and Kronos in which the latter accused the holy man of brigandage, a reference to the plundering of temple lands.[49] Shenute sums up his own legally questionable position with the dictum: "It is not brigandage for those who possess Jesus."[50] On one occasion Shenute even tacked an accusation written on papyrus sheets to the door posts of Kronos' house, whereupon Kronos cut them into little pieces with a scalpel and ostentatiously cast them upon burning embers.[51] The fact that Christians went to the temple for oracles intensified Shenute's concern, but he resolutely repudiated Kronos' suggestion that his monks and property managers[52] had carried off fragments of meat from the place.[53] Christian rustics obviously found it difficult to break ties with the old ethos, for one can easily imagine persons who received oracles also leaving the temple with sacrificial meats. Only men directly affiliated with the White Monastery, the monks and their agricultural supervisors, were free from taint of accusation.

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[44] The patriarchate of Alexandria had contact with the middle reaches of the river mainly in connection with collecting the produce from its estates with boats. Cf. the "boat of the catholic church of Alexandria" and other examples listed in Friedrich Preisigke, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyrusurkunden*, vol. 2 (Berlin 1927), 324 (under the rubric of *ploion*).

[45] Shenute, *Opera*, 42–47.

[46] Ibid., 43, lines 3–5, 15–18.

[47] Ibid., 44, line 15.

[48] Supra, Ch. IX, n. 19.

[49] *Sinuthii Archimandritae Vita et Opera Omnia I: Textus*, edd. Iohannes Leipoldt and W. Crum (CSCO, Scr. Coptici, Ser. 2, vol. 2, Paris 1906), 79, line 16f. Coptic text is hereinafter cited by principal editor Leipoldt and page number.

[50] Shenute, *Opera* (Wiesmann, 44, line 9f.).

[51] Ibid., lines 11f. and 17–21.

Shenute's second letter to Kronos enumerates many recriminations against him. After the passing of the Lenten fast and celebration of the paschal mysteries, the pagan complained: "If you were really a monk, you would not have performed these slaughterings [of animals] during those forty days."[54] Kronos thus taunted Shenute with a higher standard of asceticism than practicable for his congregation at the White Monastery. Shenute brushed aside the objection with an obvious reference to the "killing of pigs and cows which are slaughtered in the house of the pagans,"[55] an oblique reference to pagan sacrifices. The proscriptions collected in the Theodosian Code had little efficacy in the upper Nile valley at this time. It was one thing, however, to kill animals for nutrition, and quite another to slaughter them ritually in front of a cult effigy. This distinction, as the *Pro Templis* of Libanius indicates, was observed.[56] Shenute took pains to justify his action *vis à vis* the frank paganism of Kronos:[57]

> If I did not behave rightly because I gave [bad] example to idol-worshippers, how much [more] a crime is it for you that you yourself committed a crime within those forty days and on the solemn and holy day of the Pasch, while all celebrate, even the just emperors. . . .

Kronos, provoked by fear that the charge of sacrifice would be laid against him, was at pains to justify himself: "Come and search my house if you may find any idol there.[58] Shenute's reply reflects the uncompromising nature of his mission:[59]

> After searching your house I found no idol. Are there no other idols for you except those which I might carry off? Or if I carried off your household idols, could I really hide the sun in the sky and the moon

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[52] Shenute, *Opera, Textus Copticus* (Leipoldt, 80, line 5).
[53] Shenute, *Opera* (Wiesmann, 44f.).
[54] Ibid., 45, line 19f.
[55] Ibid., 45, line 21f.
[56] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 1.
[57] Shenute, *Opera* (Wiesmann, 45, lines 23–26).
[58] Ibid., 45, line 29f.
[59] Ibid., 45f.

> and the stars which you worship? Or shall I build walls in the west, lest you make prayers in the direction of the setting [of the heavenly spheres]? Shall I stand watch at the river and [every] canal, lest you pour a libation of *lotiones* over the waters? Cease these lying, crafty words! May you fall into great evil!

The locally worshipped deities were thought to have the same power over the fertility cycle as the "famous" Egyptian gods Sarapis and Isis, hence the pouring of sacrificial libations to Kronos-Pethe into the irrigation canals. Shenute's polemic reveals the basic futility of the legislation against sacrifice and idol-worship in a rural religious culture activated by an animistic world-view wherein idols stood everywhere. Genuine conversion (γνησία μετάνοια) required a change of heart that no imperial law could supply.[60]

Shenute's struggle against paganism in the countryside was to a large extent one against the high-handed and exploitative tactics of the pagan landed magnates as well. Freeholders and *coloni* thus became dependent on the patronage of the monk for the recovery of impounded moveable property.[61] The second epistle "Against Kronos" berates the addressee for a series of incidents:[62]

> For just as you are impious, you oppress the poor with injuries. Is it not some [great] insult that you pursue people, particularly presbyters of the church, when you drive drive them from their houses. . . . You invade their domiciles, although son nor father nor anyone else of them is there, because they have fled, and you cart off their draught animals, waggons, and saddlery, and compel to be included in your estates what was carried off, to the advantage of your own property.

Many presbyters, deacons, and subdeacons were landowners who farmed smallholdings. They found it expedient to complain to Shenute and join the *Rachezüge* against the pagan landed magnates, particularly when the bishops as the administrators of the ecclesiastical *fundi* silently supported the interests of the pagan upper classes rather than the Christian smallholders. Kronos also imposed *corvées* on these folk. The man interrupted the local Paschal liturgies and compelled the rustics unwillingly to drag some newly constructed river boats down to the water.[63] The synchronism was perhaps an unfortunate coincidence, but possibly not. Whatever the case, Shenute saw it as an impious attempt to disrupt the most important Christian festival of the year.

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[60] On the use of this term, cf. Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 328.

[61] The most formidable statement of this thesis is found in: Peter Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971), 80–101.

[62] Shenute, *Opera* (Wiesmann, 46, lines 3–10).

[63] Ibid., 46, lines 11–14.

Shenute expounds a series of other social and economic abuses in the Second Epistle Against Kronos. Landed magnates of Christian persuasion undoubtedly had similar failings, but the argument proved particularly effective against the pagan Kronos in the short-term interest of Christianizing the countryside. One abuse which evoked complaint was the selling of meat parts from a calf that was about to die to widows, the aged, and travellers at an inflated price.[64] Another instance occurred when the pagan Blemmyes raided the Upper Nile:[65]

> You collected people to watch over your boats for you at that time when you were wont to flee the barbarians. But did not the barbarian pursue *them*? They fled to other places to save themselves after their wives and children and a little furniture had been put on the beasts of burden and waggons from their houses.

It is unknown if any Christians went into captivity because of this. Finally, Kronos extorted payment in kind to meet the expenses of fuelling a bath-house:[66]

> You demanded from some the supply of wheat in individual houses, from others (since such things abound among men) 25 *modii*, from others yet one *artaba* [of grain] on the occasion of your washing in the baths, although the people begged and said: "We do not wish to bathe. We care for nothing [except] the bread which we consume [to the last crumb]. For our children are hungry and naked." The greater part of them professed: "We are not accustomed to go to the baths." But the baths themselves did not vex them, because the people built them and houses for you. Were the *coloniae* till now villages? Have you erected their houses in them? These hardships are the same, by which you inflict upon them your vexations, all the *corvées* and injuries.

Shenute's works typify the bitterness of the Coptic peasantry at the landed magnates and priesthoods with their temple estates who forced the hard-pressed farmer to hand over his agricultural surplus and to expend the labor which his own buildings and canals needed to accomodate the luxurious tastes of the wealthy. It is ironic that, while Shenute's efforts helped to generate a Coptic Christian self-consciousness in the face of age-old Hellenic exploitation dating from Ptolemaic times, the real abuses were endemic to the Egyptian economy, and remained a permanent feature of life in the Upper Nile valley, despite the great religious transformation then in progress, whose proponents thought they espied better days ahead.

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[64] Ibid., 46, lines 15–21. Another similar action: Ibid., lines 22–30.

[65] Ibid., 46, lines 31–35.

[66] Ibid., 46f. Shenute avoids using the terms "corvée" (ἀγγαρεία) and "impressed workman" (ἀγγαρευτής), both of which turn up in the papyri.

Shenute's two epistles against Kronos have a unique significance. They constitute the only extensive record of the verbal confrontation between the entrenched pagan aristocracy of the countryside and a Christian catechist. The battle lines lay far removed from the Neoplatonic and Atticist predilections of the learned polemicists at a *kosmopolis* like Alexandria.[67] The religious preferences of the competing sides were irreconcilable and non-negotiable. The battle was fought amidst an intense backdrop of social and economic exploitation wherein the monks, who like Shenute arose from the same farmers of the Nile green belt as their congregations, became the advocates of the Copts, whose language they spoke, whether it came to repairing canals or explaining the workings of divine providence. This Shenute removed from Sarapis, Isis, Kronos, Pan, and a host of other deities, and placed it in the hands of the Christian God. The monks had the task of abetting that providence through litanies and liturgies, but also by helping the peasant to keep more of his agricultural produce. A good monk was surely a sign of the workings of providence. Thus, Shenute identifies the economic exploitation practiced by landed magnates like Kronos with the oppressions of Pharaoh in the Old Testament books familiar to the Copts.[68] The pagan Gesios upon whom Shenute laid a curse for being impious (ⲀCEBHC) and insulting Christ was perhaps of Kronos' class as well.[69]

Besa relates one last tale which illustrates the economic spoliation of Christians, this time by the residents on the island of Paneheu, which was situated within sight of Hermopolis-Shmin. The island had many vineyards whose owners coerced the Christian farmers of the district every year to purchase their wine, which Besa calls "putrid". It is not clear whether the price was too high, or the vintners used extortionate practices to sell wine that no one wanted. A committee of farmers lodged its complaint with Shenute, who advised them to go to their houses and away from the judgement of God. The sequel is worth quoting in full:[70]

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[67] Isidore of Pelusium (ob. 430) is typical in this respect. *Epistulae*, PG 78.
[68] Shenute, *Opera* (Wiesmann, 47, lines 13–28).
[69] Besa, *Vita Sinuthii*, Cap. 88 (Wiesmann, 24).
[70] Ibid., Cap. 86 (Wiesmann, 23f.).

> At night [Shenute] crossed to that island which sticks up from the waters and was planted with vineyards. He struck the earth of the island with a blow of a small *baculus* of a palm which he carried in his hand. He said: "I tell you, O island of Paneheu, transfer yourself to the middle of the river and submerge into the depths, that they [the pagans] would cease to annoy the needy. The island with the vineyards and cabins (*casae*) gradually went over to the center of the river, and before dawn they [the houses] were entirely covered by the waters, and the swift-sailing vessels (*actuariae*) sailed over it. Thus was the name of God brightened by [Shenute].

The economic and social data are undisputable. As for the "sinking" of the island, it is likely that a shift in the river bed eroded it. Alternatively, Shenute perhaps awaited the onset of the Nile flood before cursing the island and its vineyards. Then, a severe innundation will have flooded not only the island, but the flatlands round about. At any rate, Besa remembered the incident differently as a piece of Christian "magic" or heard the story in this form. It was more than magic. Shenute thereby established the claim of the Christian God to control the Nile flood, a viewpoint already being expressed by the patriarch of Alexandria after the destruction of the Serapaeum in 391, but one that took longer to ascend the remoter districts of the Nile basin. The suppliants of Isis carried palm branches, as Shenute did here, in the rites and processions of the Semasia, an ancient festival celebrated in July when the flood gave the first signs of starting.[71] Papyri report expenses for these ceremonies as late as the second or third century A.D.[72] The incident bears some relation to the increasingly prevalent tendency to Christianize rite in order to establish the claims of the Christian God irreducibly and thereby aid catechization.[73]

II. The Closure of the Isis Temple at Canopus c. 487–89

It can hardly be doubted that Shenute's patronage of the Coptic peasantry aided the spread of Christianity in the towns and villages of the Upper Nile valley. The Shenutian literature is striking mainly because of the aggressive spirit shown by the monks, who brooked no interference from the civil authorities when they violated the public peace. But Shenute's biographer Besa, who had every reason to exaggerate this achievement, remains remarkably silent about the conversion either of prominent dynasts or farmers: the villages of Pleuit and Paneheu remained adamantly pagan to the end, as did the magnate Kronos and the temple priesthoods. Thus, the definitive Christianization of this district, which consisted of the provinces of First and Second Thebais between Antinoe and Koptos, a stretch of some two hundred miles, must have come well after Shenute's death in 466. There is, in support of this argument, compelling evidence about the survival of paganism at two other sites on the river, Canopus-Menouthis at the westernmost mouth of the Nile near Alexandria (province of First Aegyptus) (c. 482–89) and at the extreme other end of the river, at Philae on the southern border of Second Thebais (c. 450–537).[74]

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[71] Bonneau, *La Crue du Nil*, 375.

[72] Ibid. An Egyptian papyrus of 1166 B.C. describes the ancient custom of making offerings of palms and roses at the festival of the Nile, and calls them "plantes d'Isis pour le main." Ibid. 397.

[73] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 4.

The life of Severus of Antioch written by Zachariah of Mytilene gives a detailed description of conditions in the Nile delta during the episcopate of Peter III of Alexandria (482–489).[75] Canopus-Menouthis lay a mere fourteen Roman miles from Alexandria. The road from the city ran through the Canopic gate past the hippodrome and nekropolis in an east-northeasterly direction. The temple at Canopus-Menouthis had been a prominent site for the worship of Isis, and in the fifth century received visitors from such centers of Hellenic religion and thought as Athens[76] and Aphrodisias in Caria.[77] The place accomodated the sick, who after sacrificing incubated at the shrine until Isis appeared in a dream vision and cured their maladies.[78] The patriarchate, outraged at the presence of a virulent cult close by, secured the closure of the temple in the wake of the destruction of the Serapaeum in Alexandria in 391 and procured the baptism of the rustics living in the environs of the Isis temple.

The impression of a Christianized countryside was deceptive, for the cults at Menouthis went on in secret and the nearby villagers still worshipped Isis, or at any rate believed in her daimonic powers, that is hostile kratophanies.[79] This revelation came after the formal accusation of performing sacrifice against certain pagan professors at Alexandria in the circle of the Hellenic sophist Horapollon the younger. Stephen, a monk of the Enaton monastery, who heard the story about this from Paralios, a student of rhetoric in Alexandria, induced the latter to tell all he knew to the patriarch Peter, who thereupon authorized the formation of a striking force to march on the temple and destroy its altar and idols. The task was assigned to members of the regular clergy and to the Tabennesiote monks who had a convent at Canopus.[80] The author Zachariah and some *philoponoi* of Alexandria, as friends of Paralios, went along as well. Zachariah is thus a unique witness. His account is fully consistent with the archaeological and epigraphic data found at other sites.

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[74] On the background of continuity for the cult at Menouthis, cf. supra, Ch. V, Sect. 2. On Philae, Ch. IX, Sect. 3 and 4.

[75] For the full particulars on Zachariah of Mytilene, cf. supra, Ch. V, Proleg.

[76] Supra, Ch. VI, Sect. 3.

[77] Supra, Ch. V, Sect. 2.

[78] This is the obvious purport of Zachariah's narrative. Infra. Eunapius of Sardis emphasizes the numerous pilgrim traffic to both the Serpaeum and to Canopus, observing that it equalled the size of the *demos* at Alexandria. *Lives of the Sophists* (Wright, 420f.). It is certain that incubation was practiced at Canopus, but Eunapius is not specific on this question. He indicates "rites" (τελούμενα) and "mysteries" (ἄρρητα ἱερά). Ibid. 416f. and 418f.

[79] On the daimonization of the Hellenic and Semitic gods, see supra, Ch. II, Sect. 1.

The band from Alexandria must have reached Menouthis toward the end of the day, as they had to cover fourteen miles and round up the Tabennesiote monks at Canopus. The sense of awe which gripped Zachariah that evening retains that character even for the modern critic. He writes:[81]

> We arrived at a building which was completely covered with pagan [hieroglyphic] inscriptions. In one corner there was built a double wall. The idols were hidden behind this wall. A narrow entrance in the shape of a window led there, and it was by this means that the priest got inside to perform the sacrifices. Hoping that our investigation would come to nothing, the pagans got the help of the priestess who lived in the building—they were *au courant* concerning the upheaval that had taken place in the city—and blocked the entrance with stones and lime. Moreover, lest anyone perceive the recent character of the masonry and discover the artifice, they placed directly in front of it a small stand (σκευάριον) full of incense (λίβανος) and round-cakes (πόπανα), and they had suspended a lamp (κανδήλα) which burned as bright as broad daylight. As a result, Paralios was a bit upset and perplexed, not knowing what had become of the entrance, which was shaped like a window. He finally discovered the trick, but not without difficulty. He made the sign of the cross, put down the lamp, moved the stand, and pointed out the entrance, which was blocked with stones at that moment and fresh masonry. He next asked the Tabennesiotes accompanying us to lend a hand and bring an ax, and then he charged them to open what had been freshly walled up and make apparent the original shape [of the opening]. A Tabennesiote then went in. When he saw the array of idols and observed the altar covered with blood, he cried out in

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[80] Zachariah, *Vita Severi*, 27. These are presumably the same monks who, according to Eunapius, imported relics into the temples of Canopus shortly after the destruction of the Serapaeum in 391. *Lives of the Sophists* (Wright, 424f).

[81] Zachariah, *Vita Severi*, 27–29.

> Coptic: "One God!" (*had 'Alāhā*), *as he wished to say by that that it was necessary to extirpate the error of polytheism.*

Zachariah here confirms the survival of a pagan priesthood well beyond the time of Shenute of Atripe (ob. 466), but within a day's walk of Alexandria. Few texts from this period reflect comparable psychological insight in an author, or catalogue the objects found in a building with such attention to detail. Hieroglyphics and low reliefs commonly covered the façades of Egyptian temples, as we know from the shrine of Isis at Philae.[82] The question as to whether the priests at Menouthis could any longer have read the inscriptions is problematical. Knowledge of the hieratic texts was falling into desuetude even in the time of Horapollon the Elder, an ancestor of the pagan grammarian of the same name who figures prominently in Zachariah's narrative.[83] The elder Hoapollon wrote a work entitled *Hieroglyphica* in the fourth century A.D., in which he interprets the "images", that is the hieroglyphic letters, symbolically and reveals a complete lack of understanding of the old language,[84] but his ignorance was not shared, as the latest known dated hieroglyphic inscription was cut in 394, during the reign of Theodosius the Great (379–395), and the latest demotic inscription—a simplified but analytically identical script to the hieroglyphic—in 476, during the reign of the emperor Zeno (474–491).[85] Knowledge of hieroglyphic texts probably extended later than the chronological limits of the evidence, and may well have lasted until the time of the Menouthis incident.

The monk's exclamation "One God!" (*had 'Alāhā* = εἷς Θεός) appears frequently as a monotheistic expression in fourth- and fifth-century Syrian inscriptions,[86] and suggests what formulae might have been inscribed over the hieroglyphics during the subsequent cleansing of the temple. Zachariah's account suggests that, apart from being an expression of Christian militancy *vis à vis* the old cults, it was also thought to have a certain apotropaic force which obviated the daimonic powers ascribed to the old gods and thought to reside in idols, altars, the blood of the victims sacrificed thereon, and even the stones of the sanctuary.[87] Zachariah himself was too rationalistic to subscribe to such superstitions. The Tabennesiote monks will, on the other hand, have had the occasion not only to shout "One God!" often, but also to incise it on the walls of temples along with other sundry expressions. One can hardly doubt that the temple at Menouthis subsequently received this treatment as well.

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[82] Etienne Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques et latines de Philae II: Haut et Bas Empire* (Paris 1969). Plates at end of volume.

[83] Supra, Ch. V, Sect. 2, and infra, Ch. IX, Sect. 3.

[84] Horapollon the Elder, *Hieroglyphica*, ed. C. Leemans (Amsterdam 1835). Idem, *The Hieroglyphics of Horapollo Nilous*, tr. Alexander T. Cory (London 1839).

[85] Infra, Ch. IX, Sect. 3.

[86] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 2, and Ch. X, passim.

[87] On the question of "daimonic" ritual contamination, cf. supra, Ch. II, Sect. 2.

The secret chamber yielded a large cache of idols, including a wooden (ξύλον) image of the ubiquitous Kronos, who stood in the pose of holding out a serpent to the suppliant. The apotheke also contained a menagerie of animal idols, including those of dogs, cats, monkeys, crocodiles, and other reptiles. Zachariah was reliably informed that a priest had in recent years transferred all these objects from the temple at Memphis "when he apprehended that paganism had lost its force and was about to be abolished."[88] The work begun by Shenute of Atripe in the middle reaches of the Nile basin seems thus to have begun to bear fruit by the early 480's. A ship could easily have sailed down the Nile from Memphis at the southern angle of the delta and have landed the idols at Menouthis without detection or any serious interference. The landed magnates who staffed the local priesthoods seem thus to have remained in touch and to have cooperated on matters of common interest. Zachariah adds that many of the idols were of great antiquity and consequently in a state of great deterioration. These were consigned to a huge bonfire.[89] The monks did this, as Zachariah admits, to convince the pagan inhabitants of the adjoining village that the incarnation of Christ had deprived "the pagan gods and *daimones*" of their power. Unlike most critics of the Hellenic cults, who considered the gods and *daimones* to be one and the same, Zachariah drew a distinction between the two.[90] The officials of the patriarch then drew up an inventory of the objects that had not been destroyed:[91]

> As for the other idols, we made a description of those which were of bronze and those which were fabricated with a certain ingenious art, as also of those which were of marble, and of all their shapes, without forgetting the altar and dragon of wood. We then sent this inventory into the city to Peter the patriarch of our lord Christ Jesus and asked him to apprise us of what we had to do [next].

Zachariah leaves the purpose of the registry unstated, but allows the inference that the objects became the property of the Alexandrian see. Some of them might have been preserved because of their artistic worth and catechetical value, but the rest would certainly sold off on the bullion market. Pillaging temples was a profitable venture, and the inventory would perhaps stop the clerics from pilfering some of the metal objects.[92] Zachariah differs from certain Christian writers in one other respect: he freely gives the names of the deities, as did Shenute of Atripe, and felt no compunction about mentioning the instruments of pagan cult.

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[88] The text here is not completely certain. Zachariah, *Vita Severi*, 29.
[89] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 29.
[90] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 30, Syriac line 4.
[91] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 30.

Menouthis, the village which adjoined the temple, had been formally Christianized for some time, but the new religion had not taken firm root. The place was one of thousands of such sites listed in the ecclesiastical registers as "converted", or rather as "Christian villages", having a small church, a presbyter to perform the liturgy, and a number of deacons, but the *pro forma* administrative fact differed radically from the cultural realities of the countryside. Zachariah explodes the myth about Menouthis succinctly:[93]

> Those who passed for Christians at Menouthis and those who made up the clergy of the village church were, with the single exception of their presbyter, all of them weak in their faith, to the point that they were enslaved by the money that the pagans gave them, lest the [villagers] hinder them from offering sacrifices to the idols.

Sacrifices at idol-temples had long ago been proscribed, but, as in rural Bithynia, it was still possible to slip into such places and perform the forbidden rites, in this instance directly under the nose of the immense bureaucracy of the Alexandrian see in the 480's. The rustics dreaded the daimonic powers of the old gods, that is their hostile kratophanies, whose propitiation these folk seem never really to have renounced:[94]

> The evening of the day on which we did these things having arrived, after the inventory had been drawn up, in order to prevent us from leaving, the [villagers] declared that they feared suffering some daimonic vexation if they kept custody of the idols [in their houses, where Christians wanted to store them], and reckoned that it was our job to do so. For their part, *the pagans living in Menouthis* thought and said that we would infallibly die during the night.

The presbyter, impressed by the Tabennesiotes' zeal for askesis and the enthusiasm of the *philoponoi*, thereupon invited the party from Alexandria to deposit the idols inside the church, to have dinner, and to spend the night. The upshot resembled something that must have happened thousands of times in villages throughout the Greek lands.

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[92] Cf. the cases of the destruction of the Serapaeum of Alexandria and of the Marneion at Gaza. Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 3, and Ch. III, Sect. 4.

[93] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 30f.

[94] Zachariah, *V. Severi*, 31.

The monks recited the psalter throughout the night, concentrating on the passages which expressed the power of the Christian God over all idols: "All those who adore works of sculpture and glorify themselves with their idols are confounded" (Ps. 96.7), and: "The gods of the pagans are *daimones*, but the Lord is the creator of the heavens" (Ps. 95.5); and finally: "The gods of the pagans are of silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have neither a mouth nor power of speech" (Ps. 113.12–13).[95] The Tabennesiotes, to the surprise of the pagans, survived the night, and consequent upon orders given by the patriarch began dismantling the Isis temple. They made no attempt at this juncture to install relics and a martyrion in the temenos, probably because of the virulence of the local cult, which had of late drawn visitors from Aphrodisias and Athens, and had many sardonic local adherents. The Tabennesiote monks were apparently not available for permanent duty at the site. This bespeaks a shortage of monastic personnel capable of catechizing villages, even within a day's walk of a great ecclesiastical center like Alexandria. Zachariah reports nothing more about the disposition of the village. Some rustics may have transferred their allegiance to the religion of the monks who had confuted their idols, but such an outcome seems unlikely for Menouthis as a whole. Zachariah's silence about the sequel suggests that no great result was achieved in terms of Christianizing the place.

III. The Cults of Philae in the Mid-Fifth Century

The temple complex on the island of Philae on the Upper Nile in the province of Second Thebais provides the decisive example of a site at which the local cult—in this instance the worship of the Egyptian fertility goddess Isis—persisted throughout the fifth century. It was only in the time of the emperor Justinian c. 537 that the priesthood was suppressed and the temples were converted into the Christian shrine of St. Stephen the Protomartyr.[96] The evidence for continuity of cult at the site lies almost exclusively in the epigraphy, including fourteen inscriptions and graffiti in hieroglyphic and the late Egyptian demotic language.[97] Ulrich Wilcken long ago argued that after 435 the priesthood of Isis no longer resided at Philae, but with the Blemmyes, an independent Nubian tribe to the south of the Roman frontier that made an annual pilgrimage to the temples. His mistaken inferences on this question stem partly from factors external to local conditions in and around Philae, and should be rejected in any case because of a philogical oversight in his analysis, as will be seen. No fundamental reason exists to derive obscure explanations for the persistence of the phenomena of pagan cult, which were everywhere about in the fifth-century empire.

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[95] Cf. the Hellenic devices and deceptions revealed when the Serapaeum was closed. Ch. II, Sect. 3.

[96] Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 342, n. 93, and infra.

[97] Francis Ll. Griffith, *Catalogue of the Demotic Graffiti of the Dodecaschoenus*

The cult and priesthood of Late Roman Philae contracted considerably through the fourth and fifth centuries, but remained comparatively strong in an institutional sense. Many of the demotic inscriptions were cut in connection with the festival of Isis that fell in the month of Choiak, that is 27 November-26 December, after the Nile flood had finally receded and the river returned to its normal level.[98] The precise nature of the ritual cannot be determined from the fourth-century epigraphy, which refers simply and cryptically to an act of obeisance in the demotic (*wšte*) and Greek (προσκύνημα) which seems to have entailed sacrifice.[99] This terminology goes back to the third century, so we must assume that cult activity retained its distinctive, if to us imprecise, character through 373 A.D., the date of the fourth-century inscriptions,[100] and beyond into the fifth century, when the terms reappear.[101] The four inscriptions of 373 all relate to the festival of Choiak, which was also called the "cleansing festival" in which the "services of Osiris", the brother and consort of Isis, were performed.[102] The suppliant in one of the inscriptions, a certain Sensnaw, the chief baker of Isis, petitioned Osiris "that he would give him cool water, namely to my father Sekhet and Sekhet-Khēm my brother."[103] Petitions for the next year's flood, which crested the following September, were evidently laid before Osiris during the Choiak festival. The bread produced by Sensnaw served the cult, it appears, in the processions in which the symbols of the Nile valley agriculture,

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(Oxford 1937), 42-130. The inscriptions of Philae are hereinafter cited by Griffith's Ph. number.

[98] Bonneau, *La Crue du Nil*, 368-70.

[99] Griffith Ph. 366 and 368.

[100] Griffith Ph. 369-372.

[101] Bonneau's list of Greek terms does not include τὸ προσκύνημα: *La Crue du Nil*, 487-495.

[102] Griffith Ph. 370. Cf. Ph. 371, where the "services of the king" appear to be those of Osiris.

[103] Griffith Ph. 372.

bread and water, were carried.[104] Another official of the place, Petēsenufē, the *pterophoros* of Isis, overlaid the figure of Cleopatra—perhaps a low-relief sculpture—with gold as part of his service at the Choiak festival.

An undated but late Greek inscription records the ceremony which preceded that of 15 Thoth (September), on which "the most sacred Nile" (ὁ ἱερώτατο̣[ς Νε]ῖλος) received offerings from its votaries as it rose to its annual flood crest. The festival seems to have begun at Philae when the waters reached the Gate of Diocletian (εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸ[ν] πυλῶνα τῆς [πό]λ̣εως Φιλ[ῶν]). The date of the inscription in this instance, 5 Thoth (= 2/3 September), was recorded in the name of a non-sacerdotal official called the pilot of the Nile (κυβερνήτης Νεί[λου]), a certain Pasenis surnamed Nopheros. Nothing is known about the identity of this office at the time, sometime after 300 A.D., although it has been surmised that the man navigated the sacred craft which carried the priests of Isis during the festival of 15 Thoth.[105]

The temple at Philae had a diverse set of cultic officials both priestly and secular in the fourth and fifth centuries. Among these were the prophets (where προφήτης = *ḥm-ntr*), who announced the arrival and depth of the Nile flood with the help of those who made the usual seasonal astronomical calculations and those who managed the nilometers.[106] The temple at Philae had several degrees of prophet, for one hears of a second prophet in 394 and later, as well as a first prophet in 373 and later.[107] The term protostolist (πρωτοστολιστής) used in the fifth-century inscriptions of the site appears to be synonymous with first prophet.[108] The fourth century saw a sacred scribe or *hierogrammateus* of Isis, who cut at least one of the demotic Egyptian inscriptions (November or December 373), and possibly a pharmacist,[109] who seems to have supervised the composition of amulets and hymns, as well as various rites connected with harnessing the magical powers ascribed to the floodwaters.[110] A baker of votive bread-loaves has already been noted, a certain Sensnaw, the chief baker of Isis of Philae and the Abaton.[111] The office of *pterophoros (md-ntr)*, men who traditionally wore the hawk's wings on their heads, also existed through 435.[112] A possible librarian of Isis will have kept papyrus prayers to Isis and perhaps the inventories (404 A.D.).[113] Literacy was important in the cult of Isis. Philae had a "lord of writing divine words" (27 November 435)[114] and a "(chief) of the secrets of Isis" (407/8),[115] the former of whom presumably copied manuscripts. Both could presumably read and interpret the lore found in ancient texts and on hieroglyphic inscriptions. The knowledge of writing and translating hieroglyphics had not died out c. 400. A scribe erected such a text on 24 August 394 in thanksgiving to the chief god of the Blemmyes, a Numidian kingdom in alliance with the Eastern Roman Empire, over whose territory called the Abaton (literally, "the Impassable") Isis was thought to preside, as well as over the temenos at Philae. Other inscriptions represent Isis' temple as a central shrine not only for the Hellenized Egyptians of Philae, but also for the Blemmyes and Nobadae, in prayers, for example, to "Isis of Philae and the Abaton, the great goddess" (373 A.D.).[116]

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[104] Bonneau, *La Crue du Nil*, 388f.
[105] Bernand 2, no. 187.
[106] Bernand 2, no. 191. Bonneau, *La Crue du Nil*, 388f.
[107] Griffith Ph. 159, 365 (452 A.D.?), 369, 375, 376, etc.
[108] Bernand 2, no. 196.
[109] Griffith Ph. 371.
[110] This is conjectural. For magic, see: Bonneau, *La Crue du Nil*, 285–294.
[111] Griffith Ph. 372.

The aforementioned hieroglyphic text of 394, the latest example of the ancient hieratic language thus far discovered, reads:[117]

> Before Merul son of Horus, by the hand (?) of (?) Esmēt-Akhōm (?) son of Esmēt, second prophet of Isis, for ever and ever. Words spoken by Merul, lord of the Abaton, great god.

The scribe who cut the hieroglyphic inscription left a record of his act written in demotic:[118]

> I Esmēt-Akhōm, scribe of the house of record (?) of Isis, son of Esmēt-Panekhate the second prophet of Isis and his mother Eswē-re. I performed work on this figure of Mandulis for everlasting, because he is kindly of face (?) unto me. To-day, the day of the Birth of Osiris, his (?) dedication festival, year 110. [24 August 394].

The scribe Esmēt-Akhōm was qualified to cut low reliefs as well, in this case the figure of Merul (in hieroglyphic) or Mandulis (in demotic), the great deity of the Blemmyes, to whom Esmēt-Akhōm had a personal devotion of some emotional intensity, this in spite of the fact that he had descended from a line of Isiac priests and was himself a non-sacerdotal official of the Isis cult.[119]

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[112] Griffith Ph. 366 and 369 (27 Nov. 435 A.D.).
[113] Griffith Ph. 259.
[114] Griffith Ph. 366.
[115] Griffith Ph. 364.
[116] Griffith Ph. 372.
[117] Griffith Ph. 436. Griffith's line numbers are omitted here.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Theological commentary is lacking in Griffith's analysis of the inscription.

Etienne Bernand has analysed the genealogies of the priestly houses of Philae, basing his work on the Greek and demotic inscriptions of the site.[120] The continuity of the family unit through 20 December 452, the date of a long Greek inscription, suggests that the Isis cult at Philae suffered few *decisive* interruptions during the first half of the fifth century. The inscription reads:[121]

> The act of adoration (προσκύνημα) of Smetchem (=Esmēt-Khōm) the protostolist, whose father was Pachomios the prophet, his mother Tsensmet. I became protostolist in the 165th year of the era of Diocletian. I came here and performed my function together with my brother Smeto (=Esmēt), successor of the prophet Smet, son of Pachomios the prophet. We give thanks to our mistress Isis and to our master Osiris, for the good, today, 23 Choiak in the 169th year of the era of Diocletian. [20 December 452]

Ulrich Wilcken supposed that the priesthood of Isis at Philae had abandoned the temenos and resided with the Blemmyes at this time because of Smetchem's statement "I came here" (ἦλθα ἐνταῦθα). Obviously Smetchem did not reside at the site. This situation, coupled with the fact that a treaty made between Diocletian and the Nubians c. 295–305 noted in a fragment of the historian Priscus of Panium, guaranteed a condominium over the site between the local priesthood and that of Rome's indispensable allies, the Blemmyes, who policed the southern approaches of Second Thebais.[122] Diplomatic and military expediency required toleration of both groups' sacrifices at the site, although this contradicted the policy set forth in the Theodosian Code, which became effective in 438. Priscus describes the arrangements made by Maximinus, probably the *magister militum per Orientem*, during the reign of the emperor Marcian (450–457):[123]

> After the Blemmyes and Nobadae had been defeated by the Romans, envoys were sent to Maximinus from both nations, desiring to make a peace treaty. And they said they would keep peace to the degree that Maximinus would remain in [Second] Thebais. When he did not welcome making a treaty for so much time, they said they would not take up arms again in his lifetime. As he did not opt for the additional talks in the embassy, they made a one hundred year peace.
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> Its articles provided that Roman captives be restored without ransom, whether [the Blemmyes and Nobadae] had then taken them or in earlier raid, and the herds (βοσκήματα) once taken away were

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[120] Bernand 2, nos. 239–245.

[121] Bernand 2, no. 197.

[122] Bury, *Later Roman Empire* 1, 237f.

[123] Priscus of Panium, Fr. 21, *Historici Graeci Minores*, ed. L. Dindorf, 1 (Leipzig 1870), 332f.

> to be returned to them, and compensation (ἀποτίμησις) was to be paid for the [animals] expended. Thirty hostages of good birth were to be handed over by the [barbarians] as a token of good faith in behalf of the treaty.
>
> The [Blemmyes and Nobadae] were to be permitted unrestricted access according to ancient custom (κατὰ τὸν παλαιὸν νόμον) to the temple of Isis, with the Egyptians having care of the river boat, set on which there was to be transported the effigy of the goddess. The barbarians were to be allowed to transport the statue to their own country for a stipulated period of time and, after making use of it, they were supposed to restore it to the island [of Philae]. This arrangement being suitable, Maximinus saw fit that the treaty be ratified in the temple on Philae.

The Blemmyes and Nobadae will thus have had their own priesthood of Isis in the fifth century, composed of a scion of the family of Pachomios, namely Smetchem the protostolist mentioned in the Greek inscription of 20 December 452, who accompanied the statue (ἄγαλμα, ξόανον) of Isis to the land of the Blemmyes and Nobadae, that is, the Abaton of the demotic inscriptions. This much agrees with Wilcken's argument. He failed to observed, however, that Smetchem came to Philae *alone*, that is to say "I came here" (ἦλθα ἐνταῦθα). His brother Smeto, as the son and successor (διάτοχος, sic) of the prophet Pachomios, evidently *resided at Philae continuously* and was joined by Smetchen, who came there only periodically for the obligatory sacrifices. After Smetchem arrived, he performed his own good work (ἐποίησα τὸ ἔργον μου) at the same time as his brother Smeto (ἅμα καὶ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ μου Σμητό, διάτοχος).[124] The men then made a thank offering *together* to Isis and Osiris (ε[ὐχ]αριστο̣ῦ̣μεν). Rather than Bernand's hypothesis that a member of the family retired to the Abaton "at the moment when paganism was threatened at Philae . . . to serve the goddess,"[125] it seems more probable that Smetchem had merely Abaton and attending to the cult in the barbarian temenos in order to maintain the goodwill of the Nilotic gods. But the priesthood at Philae remained in the hands of his brother Smeto and kept its influence over the cult even when it was practiced among the Blemmyes and Nobadae.

The expediency of allowing the cult to persist at Philae lasted even after Florus, the augustal prefect of Egypt, defeated the barbarians once again in c. 452,[126] for later inscriptions appear at the site, one by Smetachates, son of Smeto (454/5).[127] The Blemmyes and Nobadae also returned to celebrate the sacred meal with the goddess after Florus' victory, as a mutilated inscription of 456/7 suggests:[128]

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[124] The correct spelling is διαδόχου. From its position in the sentence, διάτοχος can only be the appositive of Smeto. Bernand 2, no. 197.

[125] Bernand 2, 243f.

[126] Bernand 2, 244.

> In the time of Smet the archprophet. Parnous, son of Pachomios, in the year 173 [of the era of Diocletian]. I am first president of the sacred dining association (πρωτοκλίναρχος) . . . they did not cross over. . . . The god until the . . . it did not cross over until the 173rd year [of the era of Diocletian].

As the expression "president of the dining association" (κλίναρχος) commonly turns up in the Nubian inscriptions, one is inclined to suggest that the sacred repast implied by the term belonged to the ritual connected with the visit of the Blemmyes and Nobadae to Philae, when they removed or returned the Isis statue of the temple there. Bernand has suggested, with due caution, an emendation to the text, allowing it to read "the god did not cross over until the . . ." (οὐκ ἐπέρασεν ὁ θεὸς ἕως τῆς . . .), thereby confirming this hypothesis. Such a supposition has the merit of historical plausibility in its favor, as the shrine remained open with a priesthood, and with the barbarians maintaining access to it as well, until c. 537, when the bishop Theodore converted it into the martyrion of St. Stephen the Protomartyr.[129] Barbarians who adhered to the Isis cult and Hellenes from Egypt and other parts of the Mediterranean may still have made the pilgrimage to Philae after this, for some of the personal graffiti dating from after the Christianization of the temenos lack the Christian symbols that other such inscriptions possess. Some examples include:[130]

> I am Theodosius, a Nubian.
> I am Dioskoros.
> I am Sophonias.
> A Nubian.

Other evidence confirms these suppositions.

Relations with the Blemmyes and Nobadae did not always remain stable, and this affected the temple cult at Philae. It will be recalled that the "great pharmacist of the workshop," Patsinamre by name, recorded his obeisance, that is sacrifice, in a demotic inscription in the month of either Athyr or Choiak in 373 A.D.[131] He adds:

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[127] Bernand 2, no. 198.

[128] Bernand 2, no. 199.

[129] See the sixth-century inscriptions discussed in Bernand 2, nos. 200–204.

[130] Bernand 2, nos. 205, 207, 209, 210.

> In the year named (sic) the Belleu (?) attacked the Nubians and gave hostages (?) (took prisoners?) in the year 90 of Diocles. In the year named, the skyboat of Isis was far away for two years, and it reached the Abaton.

It has been conjectured with justification that the Belleu and Nubians, the *Blhm·w* and *Nwbe·w* in demotic spelling, were none other than the Blemmyes and Nobadae.[132] The conflict between the two nations developed outside the immediate compass of Roman territorial interests, being confined to the Abaton. The "sky-boat of Isis" seems to have been the carriage, perhaps constructed in the shape of a Nile river boat, in which the priests of Philae delivered the statue of the goddess to the barbarians. Troubles in the desert prevented its safe return for two years, rather than the normal interval prescribed by ancient sacred law (κατὰ τὸν παλαιὸν νόμον).[133]

The promulgation of the Theodosian Code, with its proscription of sacrifice and other cult practices on 15 February 438, was perhaps felt at Philae as well.[134] A synchronism in the demotic inscriptions passed unnoticed by F. Griffith:[135]

> Esmēt senior, son (?) of (?) the *pterophoros* Pachōm, first prophet of Isis: his obeisance before Isis; in the year named an abominable command (in?) the Abaton, Phanenoth day 1, year 155.

The date was 25 February 439. Esmēt seems to have intended to list two events known to all who read this graffito: trouble with the Blemmyes in the Abaton and an "abominable command". The "abominable command", namely the edict which accompanied the publication of the Theodosian Code, took time to reach its assigned destinations. For example, the Senate in Old Rome officially recognized the new codification on 23 December 438. Esmēt took note of the "abominable command" almost exactly two months after that date. Florianus, Praetorian Prefect of Oriens, had the task of disseminating copies of the document to "all peoples and provinces." It is not impossible to suppose that a backwater like Philae in Second Thebais will have received full notification nearly a year after the dispatch of texts to the provincial *metropoleis* because of the

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[131] Griffith Ph. 371.
[132] Griffith Ph. 371.
[133] Supra, Ch. IX, n. 123.
[134] Bury, *Later Roman Empire* 1, 232–34.
[135] Griffith Ph. 332.

Nile flood.[136] The sailing season in the Mediterranean did not begin until mid-March. If bureaucratic snarls delayed the dispatch of the documents from Alexandria up the Nile to Philae, the officials of the Praetorian Prefect would have had to sit out the rising of the Nile, whose current and widespread inundation of the Green Belt would have resisted all traffic upstream, both by boat and waggon, until perhaps December, when the great river finally returned to its normal banks. The distance to Philae was in any case interminable, being some 500 Roman miles.[137] Hence the delay in promulgating the edict there until February 439.

Another feature of the cults at Philae was the regular pilgrimage of Hellenes to the site from the Mediterranean lands. These visitors at times carved the names of their friends and testimonies to their acts of adoration to the Egyptian gods on temples.[138] Marinus of Neapolis, author of the biography of the Athenian Neoplatonist Proclus, could write after 485 that "Isis is still worshipped at Philae" (Ἶσιν τὴν κατὰ τὰς Φίλας ἔτι τιμωμένην).[139] More to the point are actual cases of *pèlerinage*. For example, the historian Olympiodorus of Thebes visited the region c. 421 with a view to exploring the cults of the Blemmyes and Nobadae:[140]

> The historian says that, having stayed at Thebes and Soene for the sake of historical study, he became greatly interested in the phylarchs and prophets of the barbarians at Talmis, that is to say the Blemmyes, in his record of events. . . . They took me, he says, as far as Talmis itself, so that I might write even the history of those places, conducting me a distance of five days' journey [south] from Philae as far as the city called Prima, which was of old the metropolis (πρώτη πόλις) of the barbarian part of the Thebaid . . . He says he learned that there was emerald stone in those places, wherefrom the emerald abounded among the kings of Egypt. These things, he says, the prophets of the barbarians permitted me to observe, but this could not have been accomplished without an imperial command.

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[136] Thus Griffith Ph. 332, who needlessly inserts "(in?)". He observes: "The pagans were probably much harrassed at this time, and the Blemmyes were perhaps raiding Egypt." Bury, *Later Roman Empire* 1, 232 and 234. The province was divided into First and Second Thebais in the latter half of the reign of Theodosius II (408–450). Bury, *Later Roman Empire* 1, 237, n. 8.

[137] Danielle Bonneau's discussion is not entirely helpful in resolving this question. *La Crue du Nil*, 96–101.

[138] On this tendency, see the letter (s?) of Nearchos (2nd c. A.D.). L. Mitteis and Ulrich Wilcken, *Chrestomathie der Papyruskunde* 1/2 (1912), 147f.

[139] Marinus, *Vita Procli* 19 (Boissonade, 16).

[140] Olympiodorus, Fr. 37, *Historici Graeci Minores* 1, 465f. The date is determined by the preceding Fr. 34 of Olympiodorus, which covers the period between the joint consulship of Honorius and Constantius III in 417, and the death of the latter in 421.

The point of all this is that the Hellene Olympiodorus made contact with the prophets (προφῆται) of the Blemmyes, who not only enjoyed close relations with the priesthood at Philae in connection with the itinerant cult effigy of Isis, but drew their membership partly in later years from the family of Pachomios, as in the case of Smetchem (Esmēt-Khōm), the protostolist or first prophet, who recorded the performance of his obligation to Isis and Osiris in the previously mentioned inscription of 20 December 452.[141] The priests of Philae will have served as intermediaries in arranging for Olympiodorus' transit to the Abaton.

There is, finally, a *testimonium* about the prophets of the Blemmyes in a somewhat illiterate fifth-century Greek inscription at the Blemmyan city of Talmis.[142] It agrees with much of what Olympiodorus has to say about the Abaton and confirms the close contact between Philae and Talmis implied in the demotic Egyptian and Greek inscriptions already discussed. The Talmis inscription is dated by the name of a single phylarch, two prophets, and an official called the "president of the people's dining association" (δημοκλίναρχος). Olympiodorus made contact with the prophets himself during his journey to Talmis. Two of the previously discussed Philae inscriptions make it clear that the Blemmyan prophets visited the Isis temple there as well: Smetchem the protostolist on 20 December 452,[143] and Smet the archprophet (ἀρχιπροφήτης), who was also president of a sacred dining association (πρωτοκλίναρχος) in 456/7.[144] Only Blemmyan sacral officials held the last-named office in this region. The inscription at Talmis concludes with an oath: "And we swear before witnesses Padēs son of Bōk and Menrū son of Kalau priests, and before Hatre, at the temple" (καὶ ἑομνήομεν ἐπὶ μαρτύρων Παδής Βώκ καὶ Μενρ[οὺ] Καλαὺ οὐέεπ καὶ 'Ατρέ κατ' ἱρῶ).[145] The temple was that of Merul in Talmis. It will be recalled that the latest hieroglyphic inscription at Philae, cut by Esmēt-Akhōm, second prophet of Isis, and dated to 394, commemorated "Merul son of Horus . . . lord of the Abaton, great god."[146] Merul, like Isis, received worship on both sides of the political frontier of the Roman Empire, which proved to be something less than a cultural frontier.

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[141] Supra, Ch. IX, n. 121.

[142] Ulrich Wilcken, "Heidnisches und Christliches aus Ägypten," *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 1 (1900–1901), 411–419.

[143] Bernand 2, no. 197.

[144] Bernand 2, no. 199.

[145] Ibid., lines 14–17.

[146] Griffith Ph. 436.

The strength of the cults at Philae, seen from this viewpoint, depended to some extent on religious, ethnic, familial, and possibly even economic ties with the Blemmyes and Nobadae of the Abaton, who must have made donations to the Hellenic-Egyptian temenos at Philae.

IV. Christian Philae and the Synoikism of Cults

The Egyptian cults of Philae did not survive in isolation during the period under consideration. Various inscriptions and a papyrus document indicate, to the contrary, that the priests of Isis lived in a convenient synoikism with Christian ecclesiastical officials on the island, who gradually increased their authority as the fifth century progressed. As holds with many rural sites in the Eastern Roman Empire, the first signs of Christianization do not begin to appear until c. 425. The historian is fortunate in this instance because data survive about both the old and new religions, and one can thus trace parallel developments with a degree of certainty, rather than speculate about the fate of the Egyptian cults in an evidentiary vacuum.

The earliest evidence of the Christian religion at Philae comes from a letter of petition and complaint addressed to the coemperors Theodosius II and Valentinian III (*inter* 425–450) by Appion, who is styled "bishop of the region of Syene and Kentrasyene, and of the Elephantine eparchy of the Upper Thebaid." The bishop complains about the lack of military protection for his "diocese" against the inroads of the Blemmyes and Nobadae, whom Maximinus later brought to heel in the reign of the emperor Marcian (450–457).[147] The prelate writes in a manner that indirectly reveals the state of the churches at Philae:[148]

> Your love of mankind has accustomed you to extend your right hand to those who bring petitions. Having learned this plainly, I have come with these petitions, as it is an important matter in these times, especially as I am in the midst of offensive barbarians with my churches, between the Blemmyes and the Nobadae [. . .] we are unable to bear their [. . .] raids with no soldier in command of our places. Because of this [. . .] I undergo misfortune with the churches and those who are unable to defend those who flee to them. I utterly prostrate myself before your divine and undefiled feet, that you would see fit to order my holy churches to be fortified (φρουρεῖσ[θ]αι) by the soldiers with us, and that they be compelled [. . .] to heed all, that the soldiers stationed in the fortress called

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[147] Supra, Ch. IX, Sect. 3.

[148] Wilcken, "Heidnisches und Christliches," 399f.

> Philon Kastra (ἐν Φίλῳ [κά]σ̣τ̣ρ̣α̣ καλουμέν[ῳ] φρουρίῳ) in your own Upper Thebaid assist the churches of God in Philon. (ὑπουργοῦσεν ταῖς ἐν Φίλῳ ἁγίας τοῦ θεοῦ).

The troops lay under the command of the *comes* and *dux* of the Thebaid.[149] The Christian churches at Philae appear to have been located on the northern part of the island.[150] The demotic Egyptian inscription of 373 already cited mentions that trouble between the Blemmyes and Nobadae interfered with the movement of the "sky-boat of Isis" for two years.[151] The troubles seem to have remained endemic until the treaty negotiated by Maximinus c. 450–457. The priests of the Isis cult at Philae may thus have felt the barbarian threat in equal measure, but evidently relied on the Christian bishop to relay the petition of the entire community to the coemperors. Bishop Appion appears to have dwelt at Philae, the only site of civil habitation named in the letter, amidst the diffuse districts under his jurisdiction. The *terminus ante quem* for the establishment of an episcopate at Philae thus falls between or before the *termini* 425–450, a date consistent with conditions in the villages of northern Syria, those of Bithynia, and the parts of the middle Nile visited by Shenute of Atripe.

It is impossible to tell whether bishop Appion's petition received a favorable response. The wall at Philae was at any rate repaired sometime between 449–468, perhaps in connection with the emperor Marcian's treaty with the Blemmyes and Nobadae. The *dux* of the Thebaid, a certain Flavius Damonikos, a count of the imperial consistory, authorized the work, but the actual task of supervising the workmen and procuring the materials for one part of the job fell to the Christian bishop of the island, Daniel (σπουδῇ καὶ ἐπιεικείᾳ τοῦ εὐλαβ(εστάτου) ἐπισκόπου Ἄπα Δανιηλίου ἀνενεώθη καὶ τοῦτο τὸ μέρος τοῦ τείχους ἀπὸ θεμελίων εἰς τέλος),[152] as did the outlay of the monies (τῶν ἀνα[λω]μάτων παρεχομ[ένων] παρ(ὰ) τοῦ εὐλαβ(εστάτου) ἐπ[ισκόπου] Ἄπα Δανιῆλ).[153] The date of the inscriptions falls somewhere between 449–468, a time when a family of Isis priests still flourished at Philae, and while the delegates of the Blemmyes and Nobadae continued to arrive annually for the transportation of the goddess' statue to the Abaton. One can hardly deduce from this evidence what relations existed between bishop Daniel and Smeto the prophet c. 452, both men being near contemporaries in office. The latter will have enjoyed imperial protection in line with the maintenance of the temple under the terms of the treaty with the barbarians. On the other hand, the support of the *dux* of the *limes*, Flavius Damonikos, who must have been a Christian in view of his Constantinian *praenomen*, and the fiscal vigor of the see of Philae, must have induced some conversions among the local population on the island.

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[149] Wilcken, "Heidnisches und Christliches," 399f, line 13f.

[150] Wilcken, "Heidnisches und Christliches," 403.

[151] Supra, Ch. IX, n. 128.

[152] Bernand 2, no. 194.

[153] Bernand 2, no. 195.

If the Egyptian priestly and non-sacerdotal personnel of Isis were numerous during the first half of the fifth century, no epigraphic evidence exists at all for ordinary pagan folk. On the other hand, the pre-Justinianic Christian inscriptions yield the tell-tale signs of recent conversions. Among these is a pair of "One God" inscriptions, one of them incised on the second pylon of the Isis temple: "God holy and good, one in number" (Ἶς ψῆφος Θεὸς ἅγιος ἀγαθός), an unprecedented formulation.[154] The other, a fragmentary text, introduces the building inscription of a bishop whose name is missing with the phrase "One God who helps (Εἷς Θεὸς ὁ βοη[θῶν], etc.).[155] These divine names stand in contrast to the numerous deities often named in pairs in the pagan inscriptions, such as Isis, Osiris, Horus, and Merul. It is difficult to avoid the inference that the synoikism of cults at Philae motivated the use of these formulae in a Christian monotheistic sense. The earliest Christian inscription, on the so-called kiosk of Trajan, an Alpha-Omega with the Constantinian Christogram (Α ☧ ω), suggests the existence of the new religion on the island in some form as early as the mid-fourth century.[156] The graffiti suggest, or indicate directly, conversions among the local population, among them one Peteēsis the deacon (+ Πετεῆσις διάκ(ονος)) on the temple of Imhotep.[157] The local church drew its staff partly from recent converts or their children, for "Peteēsis" is an indigenous theophoric name meaning "that which Isis has given".[158] On the Gate of Diocletian, we meet an Apa Makarios and a "Peter, son of Iasios, of Philae" (. . . καὶ Πέτρος Ἰασίου, Φιλῶν), the latter a Christian resident of the island, the former perhaps a monk or presbyter, but of unknown origin.[159] Another such graffito mentions Pachōt son of Prēs Epiphanios

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[154] Bernand 2, no. 240.
[155] Bernand 2, no. 227.
[156] Bernand 2, no. 243.
[157] Bernand 2, no. 235.
[158] Bernand 2, no. 235.
[159] Bernand 2, no. 237.

(Παχὼτ Πρῆς ’Επιφάνιος), a single person with indigenous names common among Christians.[160] Another trace of recent conversion lies in the unaltered appropriation of local Egyptian cultic terminology for the purposes of the new religion, as for example: "The act of adoration (τὸ προσκύνημα) of Kalasiris, son of Patenoue. (Cross) Panachatis, the father of Kalasiris."[161] Panachatis evidently cut a cross on the inscription, lest it be regarded as the sign of a pagan προσκύνημα, a Greek term deeply rooted in the cultic epigraphy of Philae.[162] The use of this latter term necessarily belongs to the earliest generations of Christians on the island, if not the first.[163]

Such expressions, a common feature of the local religious lore, could not be easily eradicated and had in the end to be left alone. By the sixth century, some of the terminology was being Christianized. The great act of adoration of Smetchem the protostolist of 20 December 452 contains such a phrase and bears repeating for illustrative purposes:[164]

> We give thanks to our mistress Isis and to our master Osiris, for the good, today 23 Choiak in the 169th year of the era of Diocletian.

The expression "we give thanks" (εὐχαριστοῦμεν) turns up as a cultic expression at Philae only in Late Antiquity.[165] On the other hand, the phrase "for the good" (ἐπ' ἀγαθῷ) is deeply rooted in the cultic terminology of the island,[166] and so deeply annoyed the Christian catechists who eradicated the cult and converted the Isis temple c. 537 that it was given a new, rather heavy-handed Christian annex:[167]

> (Chi-Rho Christogram) By the love for mankind of our master Christ, the most God-beloved bishop Apa Theodore transformed this temple into a place of St. Stephen. *For the good in the power of Christ.* (Cross) By the most pious Posios, deacon and rector. (Chi-Rho Christogram)

The work (ἔργον) was completed "for the good", but this time in the power of Christ (ἐν δυνάμει Χριστοῦ). Christ "our master" (τοῦ δεσπότου ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ) had replaced the old master (δεσπότης) and mistress (δέσποινα) of the site, Isis and Osiris, as well. These terminological continuities and adaptations are hardly accidental, but rather belong to the phenomena of *Ritenchristianisierung* which emerged in fifth- and sixth-century Asia Minor as well,[168] a tendency that marked a later phase in the Christianization of the eastern Mediterranean cults. It should be noted as well that Greek was apparently the language of Christianization at Philae, for no known Christian inscription survives in demotic or Coptic. The site thus stands in analogous relation to other sites which have yielded numerous inscriptions, including the many villages of the Limestone Massif east of Antioch in First Syria, and also the villages of Djebel Druze and the Hauran plain in the Provincia Arabia.[169] Although the local dialects of demotic Egyptian, Aramaic, and Arabic prevailed in these places, the literary language, Greek, provided the channel for the importation of new religious ideas.

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[160] Bernand 2, no. 238.

[161] Bernand 2, no. 234.

[162] Bernand 2, Index, 441f.

[163] Bernand regards the men as converts to Christianity. Ibid., no. 234.

[164] Bernand 2, no. 197.

[165] Bernand 2, no. 246.

[166] Bernand 2, no. 130.

[167] Bernand 2, no. 203.

V. Conclusions

The cases of ongoing pagan belief and practice analysed in the previous sections have never been given systematic treatment, and in consequence produce a striking refutation of the view that polytheism had vanished like some evanescent spectre into Coptic Christianity. The Nilotic gods continued to be revered by persons who continued to speak the old Egyptian tongue and to record their prayers and offerings in the demotic script. It is difficult in light of this to accept the facile generalization that all Copts were Christians and that all "pagans" were merely cultural Hellenes.[170] There was, furthermore, a long continuity of native polytheism after 489. R. Rémondon has summarized a good deal of this evidence. Sites retaining their pagan character included such diverse localities as the Libyan oasis settlements of Baharia and Farafra (7th c.), Omboi (6th c.), and others.[171] One sorcerer continued to invoke Horus, Isis, and Nephthys even in the eighth century, as polytheism slipped into the world of folklore and popular religion.[172] The historian Olympiodorus, at least, understood the cultural strength of the old faith among the indigenous Egyptians when he journeyed to Talmis in the first quarter of the fifth century.[173]

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[168] Supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 2.
[169] Infra, Ch. X and XI.
[170] Infra, Appendix IV.
[171] Rémondon, "Résistance au christianisme", 72, 75.
[172] Rochow, "Zu einigen oppositionellen religösen Strömungen", 242.
[173] Rémondon, "Résistance au christianisme", 76.

The final victory of the new religion is perhaps best summed up in a sixth-century document mentioning the rise of the Nile:[174]

> (Cross) To the most honored Kalos, *chartularius* of the glorious house. I now also send the good news to your honor that the blessed, fertile river of Egypt has begun to rise by the power of Christ.

There follow the measurements of the daily rise of the flood. The name of Christ has definitively replaced that Sarapis (τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ Χριστοῦ), and the cross was added to the letter to underscore the point.

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[174] *P. Oxy.* 1830.

APPENDIX IV

SACRIFICE IN FOURTH CENTURY OXYRHYNCHUS

The analysis of the relevant provisions of the Theodosian Code and any number of direct references in fourth- and fifth-century sources have demonstrated to my own satisfaction that the sacrifice remained an archetypal feature of Hellenic religion, even in its Christian variants, until the end of this period and beyond.[1] It has nevertheless been argued from time to time that *Hellēnes*, *pagani* and *gentiles* were no more than adherents to the cultural norms of the Greek *paideia* and that, for example, this was the only real cultural issue that separated Shenute of Atripe and his rustic followers from the landed magnates and city dwellers of the Nile basin in the mid-fifth century. Such notions fail to provide an adequate explanation for Shenute's rabid behavior and disregard the phenomena of pagan cult noted in the Shenutean corpus.[2] Further inquiry suggests this to be a reductionist hypothesis.

Even a cursory glance at the little-studied and voluminous correspondence of Isidore of Pelusium, a monk of the Nile delta (ob. c. 435), reveals the author to be steeped in the Greek *paideia* rather more than Shenute. Isidore repeatedly assails the late pagan sophistic with language and examples borrowed from the Hellenic literature that he abhors.[3] This manner of proceeding amounts to little more than posturing with the aim of creating a new Christian sophistic. Isidore had no trouble distinguishing between literary-cultural behavior on the one hand, and cultic activity on the other, and his condemnation of sacrifice and the other features of pagan ritual is emphatic and uncompromising.[4] One should credit

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[1] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 2, 5, and 6. Cf. Trombley, *Survival of Paganism*, 214–21, and "Paganism in the Greek World", 347.

[2] For a different view, see: J. Timbe, "The State of Research on the Career of Shenoute of Atripe," *Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, 267f. It is difficult to believe that the apparatuses of cult noted by Timbe were simply antiques, as it were, and had no religious function. In the foregoing discussion, I have attempted to straddle the two extreme positions by arguing that class struggle was one of several features of the process of Christianization in Egypt, but that rural and urban polytheism and sacrifice were very real features of 5th c. religious life.

[3] Supra, Ch. V, Sect. 6.

[4] Cf. "the shameful rites of veneration" practiced in the temple of Artemis

Shenute of Atripe and disciples with a similar discernment.

A brief appendix can hardly provide an adequate venue for an examination of the survival of sacrifice in fourth-century Egypt, but there is suggestive evidence from Oxyrhynchus and other sites that requires mention. Thus, a letter of Psais and Syra to their son Ision (4th c.) mentions preparations for his arrival on a visit. His parents indicate in part: "Since the new year we have been quite ill, but we gave thanks to God that we have recovered. Up to this time we have not sacrificed the pigs" (ἀλλὰ εὐχαριστῶ[μ]εν τῷ θεῷ ὅτι ἐπαυμένην ἐσμὲ‹ν›, καί μέχρι τουτοῦ ο̣ὐ̣κ̣ ἐ̣θύκαμεν τὰ χυρίδια).[5] The domestic animal sacrifice at meals and special occasions had hardly died out by this time. The term "God" refers in this instance to the concourse of the life-giving Nilotic deities.

Another letter of fourth-century date from the female landlord (γεοῦχος) Klemantia to her bailiff in charge of an estate at Sadalou indicates preparations for a religious festival (διὰ τὴν ἱορτήν).[6] No mention is made of the deity in question. It would not be surprising if the six *artabae* of wheat and lentils mentioned were intended for the festival, but we are on surer ground with the honeycakes (τὰ μεικιρίδια), as sacrifices, and particularly the poorer sort, often consisted of such confections.[7]

Theodoret of Cyrrhus suggests in his *Therapeutic for Hellenic Maladies* that all notions of how to build altars had eluded the folk memory by the first quarter of the fifth century.[8] On the face of it, this argument is improbable.[9] A magico-medical prescription from

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Ephesia. Isidore of Pelusium, *Ep.* 1.55 ("To Hierax the Clarissimus"), PG 78 217B–C. This passage seems to offer a *terminus ante quem* for the dismantling of the Artemision of Ephesus, as it mentions the bodies of Hellenes found buried there in connection with some imagined rite. Isidore died, once again, c. 435. The author also had some skill for literary polemic: "For Hellenism, strengthened by many many things, ages and labors and discourses and weapons, has vanished. But our cult, having been taken up by the outsiders and poor and unlettered, has everywhere struck in a short time in the fashion of lightning, illuminating not only eyes but also minds, because it does not lie in false myths but in heavenly dogmas." *Ep.* 1.270 ("To Agathodaimon"), PG 78, 341D–344A. Literary paganism is here called *Hellenismos*. For discussion of this term, see for example: Polymnia Athanassiadi-Fowden, *Julian and Hellenism: An Intellectual Biography* (Oxford 1981), 1–12. Isidore is here seemingly mindful of the many conversions that took place after the closure of the Serapaeum of Alexandria. He was evidently unaware of developments further up the Nile in the parts around Shenute's White Monastery and at Philae, or else chose not to admit these realities.

[5] *P. Oxy.* 1299.

[6] *P. Oxy.* 3406.

[7] Cf. supra, Ch. IV, Sect. 3, and Ch. V, Sect. 2.

[8] Supra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 2, n. 154.

[9] Cf. examples supra in Ch. I, Sect. 2.

Antinoupolis (5th–6th c.) strongly suggests the use of an altar (βωμ[---]) at the time of the new moon (τὴν̣ νεομηνί[αν]) in order to ensure the efficacy of the compound. I translate the identifiable words of the papyrus:[10]

> Concerning blind-rat. Blind rat an animal. . . . (a remedy?) for the sacred rage (rabies?). . . . the festival of the new moon. . . . an altar. . . .

A fourth-century fragment of the martyrdom of St. Dioscorus during the Great Persecution (post 307 A.D.)—the earliest surviving recension—provides the telling example of how from the fourth century onward an education in the Greek *paideia* was linked to the performance of sacrifice. I quote the entire text, because it was read in fourth-century Oxyrhynchus and helped all who heard it to understand that connection:[11]

> . . . of Diocletian. . . . Dioscorus, a city councillor, after being removed from Upper Kynopolis, was brought before Culcianus the magistrate. Culcianus said: Dioscorus, we have heard that you have become quite sagacious in the *paideia*. Sacrifice and submit to the commands of the Augusti." Dioscurus said: "I will not sacrifice to such gods, nor will I submit except to God only. . . ."

Dioscorus could not perform the sacrifice even though he was a Christian Hellenist, but in the mind of the magistrate it was inconceivable (at least in the formal pretext given) that a well-educated person could possibly fail to observe the cultic apparatus described in such detail in the Homeric poems and other literature (Διόσκορε ἠκούσα[μεν ὅτι λίαν συνετὸς γέγονας ἐν τῇ παι]δ‹ε›ίᾳ θῦσον).

It is worth noting that four temples are attested in Oxyrhynchus in a document arranging for the distribution of guards in the streets of the city in 295 A.D. These buildings were dedicated to Sarapis, Isis, Thoeris, and Caesar. There was also a tetrastyle or stoa of Thoeris, which was perhaps similar to that of the Gazan Aphrodite mentioned in Mark the Deacon's life of Porphryius. Incidentally, the town also contained two Christian churches which also gave names to streets. The new religion will quite obviously have gained recognition as an accepted civic body for its buildings to have been recorded in such a fashion. The Christians controlled half as many sacred edifices as did the polytheists, and in consequence were most probably a minority of the urban population c. 300. The Nilometer was of course still in the hands of the priesthood of Sarapis.[12]

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[10] *The Antinoopolis Papyri Part III*, ed. tr. J.W.D. Barns and H. Zilliacus (London 1967), no. 140.

[11] *P. Oxy.* 3529.

As to the contents of the temples, we have an exceptionally detailed inventory taken from the sacred buildings of Oxyrhynchus proper and of those in the Oxyrhynchite and Cynopolitan nomes (213–217 A.D.).[13] The objects included statues and statuettes of the gods, including one of Demeter partly made of Parian marble and partly of wood. Other divinities represented included Neotera, Typhon, Harpokrates, Aphrodite, Zeus, Hera, Korē, and Bubastis. Among the cultic apparatus were two altars, one of bronze, the other of silver. The document lists all sorts of other objects and provides a good notion of the bullion in precious metals on hand when the temples were sacked in the later fourth century. The temple of Augustus at Oxyrhynchus was still standing in 363.[14] It is not precisely known when the other temples of the town were closed or demolished, nor for that matter can we say for certain that the process of Christianization was a coercive one. It is quite possible that the cults of the old gods became otiose and melted away in the fifth century. This tendency does not seem to have affected the status of the Greek *paideia.*

It is also worth pointing out the persistence of the oracular cult of the god Besa in the fourth century and beyond. His temple at Abydum in the Thebais was in active operation in 359, as Ammianus Marcellinus reports:[15]

> There is a town called Abydum, situated in the remotest part of the Thebais; here the oracle of the god called in that place Besa in the days of old revealed the future and was wont to be honoured in the ancient ceremonials of the adjacent regions. And since some in person, a part through others, by sending a written list of their desires, inquired the will of the deities after definitely stating their requests, the papers or parchments containing their petitions sometimes remained in the shrine even after the replies had been given. Some of these were with malicious intent sent to the emperor [Constantius II] who (being narrow-minded), although deaf to other very serious matters, on this point was softer than a earlobe, as the proverb has it. . . .

The "ancient ceremonials" certainly included sacrifices (*priscis circumiacentium regionum caeremoniis solitum coli*). It is significant as well that, although some persons were punished because of sundry incriminating documents (*chartulae sive membranae*), the temple itself seems not to have been closed. The god Bes is reported to have returned to his temple in the sixth century.[16]

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[12] *P. Oxy.* 43, verso.

[13] *P. Oxy.* 1449.

[14] *P. Oxy.* 1116.

[15] Mostly quoted from Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 19.12.3–5 (Rolfe 1, 535f.).

Oracular questions and lists of them have turned up in considerable numbers in the papyri. It was from similar documents that came the evidentiary basis for the trials of 359, a reflection of the priesthood's habit of keeping them on file. It is worth a brief look at some of these documents to establish their character. Those from Oxyrhynchus have a particular relevance, but those which survive address the prosaic concerns of ordinary people. The first of these concerns a business transaction (2nd c. A.D.):[17]

> To great Zeus Helios Sarapis and the gods sharing the same temple. Nikē asks if it is expedient for me to buy from Tasarapion the slave whom he has, Sarapion, also (called?) Gaiōn. Give me this (oracle).

Another such document concerns some family matter (1st c. A.D.):[18]

> My lord and benefactor Sarapis Helios! Is it better for my son Phanias and his wife not to agree with his father, but to oppose him and make no contract? Bring me this (oracle), an agreeable one. Farewell.

The habit of questioning the divinity had passed into local Christian usage by the sixth century:[19]

> (Cross) (Cross) O God of our patron saint Philoxenos, do you command (us) to bring Anouit to your infirmary? Show your power and let this prayer be accomplished.

As with the pagan variants, the Christian God is addressed, the question is posed, and the plea for an answer is voiced. The terminology has been carefully reworked, however, as a consequence of the Christianization of the rite. The divinity is no longer addressed as "benefactor" (εὐεργέτης), but through the medium of St. Philoxenos, the spiritual patron of the family (ὁ θεὸς τοῦ προστάτου ἡμῶν). The concepts of patronage and benefaction were inextricably related, and the difference between the old and new usages is purely formal and one of gradation.

The Oxyrhynchus papyri provide other evidence of recent conversion and Christianization of rite. For example, the Christian

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[16] Rémondon, "Résistance au christianisme," 69.
[17] *P. Oxy.* 1149.
[18] *P. Oxy.* 1148.
[19] *P. Oxy.* 1150.

God turns up in a fifth-century prayer as "God of the sheepfold's baptismal font" (ὁ Θ(εὸ)ς τῆς προβατικῆς κολυμβήθρας), an obvious reference to recent initiation into the new religion by adults.[20] Its date is consistent with the main sequence of Christianization during the fifth century as described in the preceding sections of this chapter.

Oracular questions required sacrifices, just as other kinds of petitions did.[21] They were addressed to gods besides Besa and Sarapis, as for example the "great god" Sakanobkoneus and the Dioskouroi.[22] The widespread nature of the practice explains the need to carry it over into Christian liturgies, but without the now forbidden sacrifices.

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[20] *P. Oxy.* 1151.

[21] *P. Oxy.* 923 (late 2nd-early 3rd c. A.D.).

[22] *Fayūm Towns and Their Papyri*, ed. A.S. Hunt and D.G. Hogarth (London 1900), nos. 137, 138.

CHAPTER TEN

THE ANTIOCHENE AND THE APAMENE

The cultural mechanisms of Christianization began to operate in Syria with the migration of the monks into the *territoria* of the cities in the mid-fourth century. The new religion could not take root, however, without the establishment of permanent village churches staffed by presbyters and deacons. This second stage of Christianization did not get under way until the second half of the fourth century. The Limestone Massif to the east of Antioch provides striking evidence for this process in the form of archaeological remains that permit the historian to trace the advance of the new religion through this district. These consist of the ruins of churches, baptistries, martyria, and dated Christian inscriptions which in different ways proclaim the victory of the new religion, and quite often using the "one God" formula.[1] These documents turn up on the door lintels of dwellings, in the *nekropoleis*, and on the church buildings. None of these predates the fourth century, the earliest dating from 336/7, the last regnal year of Constantine the Great.[2] They turn up in small but increasing numbers between 337–363. The main period of Christianization for the villages of the Limestone Massif was, however, c. 363–425, with a trickle of conversions continuing thereafter until down to c. 500. It is important in this connection to avoid the supposition that some few Christian inscriptions here and there reflect the religious allegiance of the whole district. It will be necessary rather to examine the evidence on a site by site basis, and to attempt generalizations only thereafter.

The central point of the Limestone Massif is the Dāna or Sermada plain, through which the Roman post road running from Antioch to Beroia goes. The massif is divided into roughly four separate areas, which are known by the names of Djebel Sim'ān, Djebel Ḥalaqah, Djebel Barīsha, and Djebel Rīḥa. We shall examine the late pagan and early Christian sites on and around each of these eminences in turn. The Dāna plain, like many smaller depressions in the Massif, had well-watered bottom lands that produced cereal grains and the vine, whereas the hillsides abounded in olive plantations.[3] According to G. Tchalenko, the fourth century proved to be an era of agricultural and demographic expansion in the Limestone Massif, the accumulated wealth coming largely from the marketing of the olive-oil surplus.[4] The profits seemingly went into the construction of impressive buildings of locally cut stone, including churches and multi-storey houses. These were first examined by H.C. Butler during the Princeton University archaeological expeditions of the early twentieth century.[5]

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[1] See the previous scholarship by J.H.G. Liebeschuetz, "Epigraphic Evidence on the Christianisation of Syria," *Akten des XI. Internationalen Limeskongresses* (Budapest n.d.), 485–508. Idem, "Problems Arising from the Conversion of Syria," *The Church in Town and Countryside*, ed. D. Baker (Studies in Church History 16 [Oxford 1979]), 17–24.

[2] Georges Tchalenko, *Villages antiques de la Syrie du Nord: Le Massif du Bélus à l'époque romaine*, (Paris 1953), 145f. This work (3 vols., Paris 1953–58) is hereinafter cited as Tchalenko, *Villages antiques*.

This period of economic growth coincided with the spread of Christianity into the Limestone Massif. Some twenty-one pagan temples or local cults have been identified in the district.[6] Most of the temples were erected in the early centuries of the Christian era, and most probably resembled in one way or another the typical small Syro-Roman temple, with a rectangular cella and a colonnaded porch.[7] The extant list of temples and cults is certainly incomplete. These structures underwent systematic destruction during the era of Christianization, and the structural and epigraphic remnants are disappointing with some few exceptions.

The pre-Christian residents of the Dāna plain had constructed at least three temples on the heights round about in the previous centuries. Of these, the temenos of Zeus Madbachos (the local Baal) atop the pinnacle of Djebel Sheikh Berekāt dominates the plain from the north. The monk Ammianus and his colleague Marianus occupied a glen near the temple and the village of Teledan (present-day Deir Tell 'Adeh). Theodoret of Cyrrhus, who records the event in his *Historia Philotheos*, fails to indicate whether the village was yet Christian, nor is there any definitive epigraphic evidence on that question.[8] The event seems to have occurred before or during the patriarchate of Flavian of Antioch (381–404).

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[3] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 2, Pl. XXXI, XXXII, XLV.

[4] See the summary in Liebeschuetz, "Conversion of Syria."

[5] *Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904-5 and 1909, Division II: Architecture, Section B: Northern Syria*, ed. Howard C. Butler (Leiden 1920), passim. This volume hereinafter cited as Butler, PAES II B.

[6] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 2, Pl. VII.

[7] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 2, Pl. VIII.

[8] Supra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 2.

Monks continued to migrate into the Dāna plain through the end of the sixth century. Georges Tchalenko has identified twenty-eight sites occupied by hermits, stylites, or monastic communities either adjoining the plain, on the hills above it, or along its approaches.[9] There can be no question that these settlements affected the religious allegiances of the district, but the sources tell us nothing except for Theodoret's narrative about Ammianus. It is at this point that the epigraphy becomes an essential source of information.

To the northeast of Djebel Sheikh Berekāt lay the monastery of Symeon Stylites the Elder at Telanissos. Being on a high hill, the site had probably once had a temple, but no trace of one survives. Symeon's three biographies attest his work of Christianization well, but they seldom bring the local villages of Djebel Sim'ān into the picture, concentrating instead on pagan pilgrims from more distant sites and particularly the Arabs who had few fixed abodes apart from seasonal encampments beside wells or wadis, and, later on, near central Christian shrines.[10] The local epigraphy becomes the predominant source once again. It suggests that the monastery operated in something of a cultural vacuum. Many of the nearby villages had begun to accept Christianity well before Symeon's arrival at Telanissos in 409. Some few others, however, did not begin to move in that direction, so far as we can tell from the inscriptions, until after his death in 460.[11] This fact provides a striking exception to the rule that monasteries necessarily brought Christianity to the countryside first and in quantifiable proportions.

The first signs of Christianization come, along with inscriptions, in the construction of churches. The archaeology is specific on the point that, of the twenty-nine churches listed in Tchalenko's survey, only seven of them date from before c. 400. Of these seven, only two were three-aisled basilicas suitable for large congregations, the Julianus basilica at Brad in Djebel Sim'ān and another at Simkhar (mid 4th c.).[12] The rest were small, single-aisle churches suitable for small or slowly growing congregations.[13] By way of contrast, nine churches belong to the fifth century, three of them three-aisled basilicas. Those to which dates can be assigned on the basis of inscriptions and architectural style are surprisingly late: Ksejbeh (414), Dar Qīta (418), Qasr Iblīsu (431, baptistry only),

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[9] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 2, Pl. CCIV.

[10] Supra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 2.

[11] Infra, Ch. X, Sect. 1.

[12] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 2, Pl. IX, XI.

[13] Qirqbize, Nurīye, Ba'ūde, Rb'ēa, and Serdjilla. Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 2, Pl. X, XIII, XIV.

Taqleh (mid-5th c.), Qalblozeh (end of 5th c.), and Rehyo (mid-5th c.).[14] In many instances these structures represent the earliest and only Christian buildings in the villages. It seems likely in light of this that the earliest congregations had no presbyters or deacons, but relied on the visits of the *periodeutai*, presbyters who made circuit tours of the rural districts to celebrate the liturgy and to impose discipline on clergy and laity. It should be borne in mind as well that monks often declined ordination to the lower clerical orders as a gesture of self-abasement before the Divinity. They were often neither temperamentally suited nor legally authorized to supervise rural congregations. It was rather by their ascetic example and the various techniques of Christian thaumaturgy and *Ritenchristianisierung* that they gradually got the rustics to acknowledge the superiority of the new religion over the cult of the Baals and fertility goddesses.[15] Emotional conversions became ascertainably firm only with the administration of baptism, the registration of tithes, and the regular activity of the village clergy. The evidence suggests that this system became widespread in the Limestone Massif only by about 450. It should be added that the largest number of churches was constructed in the sixth century, a total of thirteen buildings. Only then did Brad and Rehyo receive their second basilicas.[16]

The administrative subdivisions of northern Syria to some extent explain the pace of Christianization in the different parts of the Limestone Massif. The most extensively populated areas, Djebels Barīsha, Ḥalaqah, Sim'ān, il-A'la, Dueili, and Wastani, lay in First Syria and for administrative purposes in the *territorium* of Antioch, with the eastern fringes of these eminences in that of Beroia.[17] The northern half of Djebel Riha also lay in this zone. The southernmost boundary of First Syria ran below the southern tip of Djebel Wastani, then eastward across Djebel Rīḥa or il-Zāwiyeh, just below the villages of Kferhāya, Ruwēḥa, and Rayān.[18] The inscriptions of the villages north of this line are dated according to the era of Antioch, which began in 48 B.C. South of the line lay the province of Second Syria, whose metropolis Apamea lay on the Orontes river below the southern tip of Djebel Rīḥa or il-Zāwiyeh. The archbishops of Apamea, and Marcellus in particular (ob. c.

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[14] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 2, Pl. IX–XI.
[15] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 4, and, in particular, Ch. VIII, Sec. 4.
[16] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 2, Pl. IX, X, XI, XIII.
[17] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 2, Pl. XXV, and 3 Map 7.
[18] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 3, Map 7.

388), conducted a campaign of Christianization in the *territorium* of the city that briefly developed into a veritable civil war in the countryside replete with incursions by the church's gladiators and archers.[19] One might expect that, once the eastern Orontes plain had been cleared of rustic paganism, Marcellus would have turned his efforts to the southern parts of Djebel Riha. The epigraphy bears this hypothesis out to some extent, not only in Djebel Rīḥa but also in the flatlands on its eastern quarter that were dominated by the large village of Tarutia Emporōn. The rural inscriptions of Second Syria are dated according to the Seleucid era, which began in 311 B.C. Further up the Orontes lay Epiphaneia (present-day Hama). To its east lies the basaltic stone Djebel il-'Alā (not to be confounded with Djebel il-A'la in the Limestone Massif). It contains a small number of villages whose inscriptions suggest no serious attempt to Christianize the *territorium* until the later fifth century.[20]

Other parts of northern Syria have yielded fair numbers of inscriptions, as for example the parts around Chalkis, Lake Djabulla, and Djebel Ḥass, all of which lie between the Limestone Massif and Euphrates river, but the sparse concentrations of dated texts are insufficient to yield unambiguous conclusions about the Christianization of this zone.[21]

There are some general principles for interpreting the epigraphy of the Limestone Massif and other regions that require brief enunciation. The first is that, all other factors being equal, one cannot posit any change of religious allegiance at a site unless it be specifically obvious by an inscriptions dated from either the provincial era or on the basis of letter forms, or else from a Christian building whose architectural style can be attributed to a precise quarter- or half-century. So, for example, the proximity of monasteries like those at Teledan or of Symeon Stylites the Elder at Telanissos to sites exhibiting no signs of Christianization cannot always be taken as *prima facie* evidence that all the surrounding villages became Christian soon after the arrival of the holy man, although such an inference is often plausible.[22] For the sake of empirical accuracy, it is best to treat such assumptions with skepticism, as there is plenty of evidence for un-Christianized villages near monasteries all through the fifth century.[23] If the epigraphy of a given site fails to reflect any signs of the new religion until a certain date, it is best to presume the continuity of the old religious forms until the firm attestation of the arrival of the new religion. Tombs that fail to reflect such local changes may be taken as pagan as well. Christian epigraphy often advertised the idea that death was mere sleep, hence the use of expressions like "here lies" (ἐνθάδε κεῖται) or "cemetery" (κοιμητήριον) for tomb, that is, a "place of sleep" until the expected resurrection of the dead. Christians had every reason to emphasize the differences of their eschatological viewpoint from that of the Hellenes, and often did.

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[19] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 3.

[20] Infra, Ch. X, Sect. 8.

[21] *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie II: Chalcidique et Antiochene*, edd. L. Jalabert and R. Mouterde (Paris 1939), nos. 257–354. This series hereinafter cited as IGLS.

[22] This point has been argued in Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World."

There are, in addition to this, the "One God" inscriptions, which use the monotheistic formula often associated with temple conversions.[24] Its local usage and temporal context in the Limestone Massif varies from village to village, but it appears most often in the late fourth and early fifth centuries c. 380–420, when a great many rustics had begun to go over the Christianity. The formula had an unmistakeable significance in the otherwise polytheistic Syrian society, with its *Baalim*, fertility goddesses, and other deities. Its significance for Christian theology between c. 380–420 is minimal, for semi-Arianism had been discredited well before the Second Oecumenical Council in 381, and the monophysite critique of the supposed Nestorian "splitting" of Christ into two persons was hardly on the horizon until the Council of Ephesus in 431. The only meaningful and traceable context for the "One God" formula in the Limestone Massif between 380–420 was the repudiation of the Semitic gods and their supposed acts in behalf of men. Hence the view of the Christian God as "one who helps" (ὁ βοηθῶν), a direct assertion that the ancient "peace of the gods" was defunct.[25] Erik Peterson has interpreted these texts as exorcistic and apotropaic without proper attention to their geographical and chronological context, that is, the rise of monotheistic Christianity in the Limestone Massif between 365–450.[26] Yet his thesis has important implications, for the old divinities, now reduced to malevolent *daimones* by the Christian catechists, were often seen as the source of "evil" (τὰ κακά) in village society, as for example destructive lightning bolts and variations in the rainfall thanks to the villagers' failure to placate the *Baalim*. The rustics seem to have lived in fear of the "daimonic rage" of the divinities and in consequence erected the symbols and phrases of the new religion everywhere, on the lintels of their houses, at the *nekropoleis* and over funerary tunnels, on oil presses of recent construction, and in the churches. By c. 450 the symbols of the new religion were almost everywhere: the "One God" inscriptions, the quasi-Constantinian τοῦτο + νικᾷ ("This (cross) conquers."), the Chi-Rho Christogram (☧), and different varieties of crosses that were often incised in circles on house lintels and other monumental features of buildings.

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[23] Supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 1, and in particular Ch. IX, Sect. 2.

[24] Infra, Appendix V.

[25] See especially supra, Ch. II, Sect. 4.

[26] Infra, Appendix V.

If the new religion was not everywhere, the old polytheism was hardly in evidence any longer except in the spolia incorporated into public and Christian buildings. Here and there stood a temple or olive oil factory with the old invocations incised on it. The Hellenes of the countryside fulfilled their allegiances by visiting the old places with prayers and sacrifices, and by simply omitting the new symbols and formulae from their houses and newly hewn or constructed tombs. The new style and ideology became so prevalent that "religious indifference" can hardly explain all the omissions. Each of them has to be understood in its own local and chronological context. Often, but not always, the omissions indicate a rejection of Christianity or a failure to consider the spiritual, political, or economic advantages of accepting it.

I. The Antiochene: Djebel Sim'ān

An inquiry into the conditions affecting Christianization in the Antiochene, that is, the *territorium* of Antioch, will necessarily begin with the monastery of Symeon Stylites the Elder at Telanissos atop Djebel Sim'ān. His stele with the adjoining buildings was one of two important religious foci for the villages north of the Dana plain, the other being the temenos of Zeus Madbachos atop Djebel Sheikh Berekāt or Koryphē (the "Pinnacle Mountain"), as it was called in Greek.

Symeon reached Telanissos in the year 458 of the era of Antioch, that is 409/10 A.D.[27] The place had become Christian in the preceding decades, for a board of presbyters and deacons was already running the local church at the time of the stylite's arrival. The site is surprisingly deficient in dated inscriptions. Christianity reached the village during the half-century after a certain Rufinus erected a house lintel in 334/5 that lacks the cross or other symbols of the new religion.[28] Telanissos' location atop a high hill made it, like Koryphē, a typical "high place" suitable for the shrine of one of the local *Baalim*. The inscriptions concur. A common Christian victory acclamation used in temple conversions occurs: "Christ conquers!" (Χ(ριστὸ)ς νι(κᾷ)),[29] followed by an enigmatic quotation from one of the Psalms which can be made to say: "(Cross) An *hagiasma* suffices for your house, O Lord (Cross)," *hagiasma* being a term often used for the springs known to break through limestone sediment and become shrines of the fertility deities thought to preside over sacred ground waters (+τῷ οἴκῳ σου πρέπι [ἁ]γίασμα Κ[ύ]ριε +). The Christian buildings ultimately constructed at the monastery were impressive, particularly the great cruciform basilica that enclosed Symeon's stele. Its construction siphoned off labor from all over Syria probably between 450–470.[30] Another building was a pilgrim hostel (πανδοχεῖον) that was completed only in July 479, some nineteen years after Symeon's death.[31] The site remained a mecca for Christian city dwellers, Syrian villagers, and Arabs straight through the sixth century.[32] The *periodeutēs* John from the village of Althaka (present-day Deir el-Lathaq between Resafa and Isryeh) commissioned a mosaic in a chapel calling upon Christ to remember him and all his kin (καὶ πάντα τῶν διαφερόντων αὐτοῦ).[33] Congregations still perhaps in the midst of Christianization on the fringes of the Limestone Massif drew some inspiration from the great shrine, where the locals erected many Christian buildings in a cooperative spirit.[34]

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[27] *V. Symeonis* 24 (Hilgenfeld, 93).

The other great shrine of the district was the temenos of the ancestral deities Zeus Madbachos and Selmanes (Διὶ Μαδβάχῳ καὶ Σελμάνει πατρῴοις θεοῖς) constructed between 80–120 A.D. high atop Djebel Sheikh Berekāt.[35] The former was the local Baal of the Altar (from the Aramaic *madbakh*, "altar"), corresponding to Zeus Bōmios, who was perhaps a *baitylos* stone.[36] There is no precise information about when the cult died out. The place may have been abandoned by the time the monk Ammianus settled near the village of Teledan during the patriarchate of Flavian of Antioch (381–404), but, conversely, it may have remained sacred for decades thereafter to judge from other cases.[37] No Christian church was ever erected inside the temenos. A single undated inscription belongs to its last days: "Help, (cross) O Lord!"[38] Two villages lay on the slopes of Djebel Sheikh Berekāt (the ancient Koryphē). Of these Kharab Sheikh Berekāt, which adjoins the shrine directly to the west, had a regular clergy, but no known church, by 407, when the presbyter Rufinianus handled the erection of a monotheistic inscription on a house lintel with the ringing phrase: "One God and his Christ."[39] It expressed the renunciation of polytheism and had the apotropaic power to repel the gods of the old religion now cast as malevolent *daimones* and generally every evil.[40] The epigraphic remains at Teledan (present-day Tell ʿAdeh, properly lying on Djebel Ḥalaqah) suggest no date for its Christianization.[41] The Christian clergy of Kharab Sheikh Berekāt led by the presbyter Rufinianus presumably desecrated the temple by the usual means and tried to restrict access to it from c. 400 onward, but this will not necessarily have prevented every sacrifice.

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[28] The inscriptions discussed below are cited from *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*, edd. L. Jalabert *et alii*, 7 vols. (Paris 1929–70), but also from the editions of W.K. Prentice in *Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904–5 and 1909, Division III: Greek and Latin Inscriptions, Section B: Northern Syria* (Leiden 1922), nos. 807–1213. This work hereinafter cited as PAES III B. Inscriptions are also cited from W.K. Prentice, *Publications of an American Archaeological Expedition to Syria in 1899–1900, Part III: Greek and Latin Inscriptions* (New York 1908). The latter collection is cited as Prentice, AAES III. The Rufinus house lintel of 334/5 is published in: PAES III, B 1153 and IGLS 420.

[29] IGLS 414. PAES III, B 1160.

[30] Butler, PAES II, B 261–284.

[31] PAES III, B 1154, 1155. IGLS 416, 417.

[32] Suggested by a sixth-century inscription, IGLS 415.

[33] IGLS 421.

[34] IGLS 413, 418, 419.

[35] Prentice, AAES, III 100–108a. IGLS 465–475.

In the heights above the northern Dana plain, therefore, the cult of the great local Baal had begun to come asunder before Symeon Stylites the Elder's arrival at Telanissos in 409. It became the task of his monastery, as it seems, to clear away the last vestiges of the old polytheism, whose continuing presence presence can be no more than inferred from some few sites in the vicinity. For the purposes of discussion, we shall consider these villages in two groups: the four sites in the rolling hills northwest of a hypothetical line drawn between Koryphē and Telanissos, and, secondly, the very large number of places on the plateau to the east of the shrines.

The ancient names are unknown of the four villages northwest of the Koryphe-Telanissos line, Qaṭūra, Refādeh, Zerzīta, and Fidreh. Qaṭūra, which lies closest to Koryphē, was the scene of considerable religious flux and contrast in the fourth century, having a mixed pagan-Christian population down at least to the late fifth century. The site abounds in tombs. Of these, the most impressive and detailed has the bilingual (Latin and Greek) funerary inscription of Flavius Julianus:[42]

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[36] IGLS 465. Prentice AAES, III 100.

[37] Supra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 2. Infra, Ch. X, Sect. 4.

[38] IGLS 475. Prentice AAES, III 109.

[39] IGLS 477. PAES, III B 1126. The last pre-Christian inscription here dates from 236 A.D.

[40] Peterson in *EIC ΘEOC* stresses this feature of the Syrian "One God" inscriptions, but without connecting them to the era of Christianization (pp. 2–46), which inference was perhaps not integral to the theme of his book.

[41] E.g. "Emmanuel for the aeons. . . ." IGLS 479.

> T. Flavius Julianus, veteran of the VIII Augusta legion, dedicated his perpetual tomb to the subterranean deities and to the *daimones* of himself and his wife, for his heirs and their offspring, that they should allow no one in any manner to alienate the same tomb. And you. . . .

Julianus' interment will have most probably come in the decades after the conquest of the Roman East by Constantine the Great in 324, whereafter his veterans who had taken the fashionable praenomen or nomen "Flavius" in honor of the victorious dynasty had had time to finish their careers, buy lands, and acquire heirs. Julianus was a Hellene, but as a veteran was not entirely representative of the local rustics. He dedicated the shrine to the well-known subterranean divinities (θεοῖς καταχθονίοις) thought to guard such monuments from violation. It was a perpetual memorial (μνημεῖον . . . διηνεκές) for his soul and that of his wife, here called *daimones*, a rare testimonial to pagan views of an afterlife.[43] House lintels without crosses suggest the existence of pagan families for at least another century, including one Flavius Phileon (391 A.D.) and the unnamed proprietor of another building (476 A.D.).[44] One of the very earliest and most unusual Christian inscriptions of the Antiochene turns up at Qaṭūra as well on a house lintel:[45]

> Christ of God, help! One God only. Thalasis built (this). As many things as you say, friend, may it be double for you too! (Date) Enter, Christ!

The date is 336/7. This text corresponds splendidly with another on an undated pagan lintel:[46]

> Joy. Zeus. Health. As many things as you say, friend, may it be double for you too!

A man erecting a house had to pay tribute to the local lore of hospitality, over which Zeus had presided in the past. But as a believer in the new faith, Thalasis had to concoct a suitably monotheistic formula which left no ambiguity (Θ(εο)ῦ Χρηστέ. . . Εἷς Θεὸς μόνος). Many of his esteemed neighbors were Hellenes at this early date, and the substitution of divinities is precise. From this obvious correspondence we deduce the real purpose of the "One God" formula, whose local context elsewhere is not so clear because of the random nature of the survival of inscriptions. Thalasis' greeting to his neighbors demonstrates that new Christians lived, or sought to live, in accommodation with their former coreligionists. No fourth- or fifth-century church has turned up at Qaṭūra. The village may well have gone under the care of a *periodeutes* during this time. With religious allegiances divided even later in the fifth century, local funds were insufficient to construct a Christian building. The next Christian house inscription was not, in fact, erected until 466/7 A.D. by a Syrian named Barapsa.[47]

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[42] IGLS 455. PAES III B, 1127.
[43] IGLS 447. PAES III B, 1134.
[44] IGLS 440, 444. PAES III B, 1135. Prentice, AAES III 117.
[45] IGLS 443. Prentice, AAES III, 116.
[46] IGLS 446. Prentice, AAES III, 114.

At Zerzīta, the *periodeutes* Peter was active in 375/6, constructing a stoa that was part of a church.[48] He evidently supervised the congregations of the other nearby villages, including Qaṭūra, who assembled at Zerzīta for the Christian liturgy. By 423 an Aramaic-speaking clergy had finally been installed at Zerzita (Maras the presbyter and Nonnos the deacon).[49] Half a century thus elapsed between the first signs of the new religion there and the firm organization of the local church.

There is no firm evidence for the Christianization of Fidreh and Redāfeh until the 420's. At Fidreh, the last inscription with no crosses was cut in 411, and the first Christian inscription, bearing the One God formula, in 421.[50] A deacon turns up at Fidreh, but the inscription is undated.[51] The story at Redāfeh is quite similar. The earliest Christian inscription, with a Trinitarian formula and cut on a balustrade, was set up in perhaps 427.[52] The second one, a house lintel of 439, bears the words: "Jesus (Chi-Rho) Christ, beginning of the newly created man" (ἀρχὴ τοῦ νεωκτίστου). As an adaptation of a New Testament text, it suggests the recent baptism of the household, which thus became "newly created".[53] The beginnings of Christianization at Fidreh and Redāfeh thus belong to the first decade Symeon Stylites' sojourn at Telanissos. This is hardly an accidental correspondence, with Redāfeh only some 3½ kilometers from the monastery and Fidreh six. This proximity enlivened the activities of the *periodeutai*, who often consulted Symeon and made great publicity of his subordination of the natural forces and their divinities to the Christian God.

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[47] IGLS 441. PAES III B, 1136.
[48] IGLS 460. PAES III B, 1118.
[49] IGLS 459. PAES III B, 1119.
[50] IGLS 432, 437. PAES III B, 1138, 1139.
[51] IGLS 436. PAES III B, 1143.
[52] IGLS 426. PAES III B, 1146.
[53] IGLS 425. PAES III B, 1147.

There is, finally, an example of Christianizing a pagan liturgy at Redāfeh. There is an epigram of Diogenes Laertius that runs: "Herakles the splendidly victorious son of Zeus lives here. Let nothing evil enter!" (ὁ τοῦ Διὸς παῖς καλλίνικος Ἡρακλῆς ἐνθάδε κατοικεῖ. μηδὲν εἰσίτω κακόν). An undated window lintel at Redafeh makes Christ in effect the new Herakles:[54]

> Jesus the Nazarene, who was born of Maria, the son of God, lives here. Let nothing evil enter here!

The Hellene of some literacy who owned the house carried over the old liturgy and gave it Christian form perhaps not long after his conversion. The inscription is undated, but is consistent with the early fifth century in this village.

Some twenty villages occupied the plateau to the east of Symeon's monastery at Telanissos. The epigraphy is not specific enough, however, to indicate the trends in each individual village. The polytheists of the early fourth century worshipped three Semitic deities, Seimios, Symbetylos, and Leon, as we learn from the dedication on an olive press found at Kefr Nabo (Σειμίῳ καὶ Συμβατύλῳ καὶ Αέοντι θεοῖς πατρῴοις).[55] W.K. Prentice erroneously reckoned these to be the local equivalents of the so-called Baalbek triad of Zeus Heliopolitanus, Aphrodite, and Hermes. Seimios was the Baal, the principal male god who controlled the natural forces in the sky. Symbetylos' identification with various fertility goddesses like the Syrian Atargatis (Dea Syria) has nothing against it. The male Seimios was evidently a *baitylos* in the local cult because Symbetylos, his female consort's name, breaks down into the Greek "with *baitylos*" (σὺν βετύλῳ). The "triadic" cult seems logically to have gravitated around that of a single *baitylos*. Leon, the third divinity mentioned, whom Prentice identifies with Zeus Gennaios, was not always worshipped with the others. The temple at nearby Qal'at Kalōta accommodated only the first two ([Σειμίῳ (?) καὶ Συμβ]αιτύλῳ θεοῖς πα[τρῴοις]), as it seems.[56] Dedicatory statues of these deities in *aediculae* probably survived until the late fourth century ([τὸν] ναὸν καὶ τὸ χρυσοῦν ξόανον).[57] A church consisting of spolia from this temple was erected in perhaps the late fourth or early fifth century, for the village of Kalōta below the hill where the temple stood had Christian householders by 387 A.D.[58] Polytheism persisted in the neighborhood for some time, for a church completed in the village c. 492 still laid heavy stress on monotheism with a One God inscription.[59]

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[54] IGLS 424.

[55] IGLS 376. PAES III B, 1170.

To return to Kefr Nabo, the olive press with the gods' names on it was erected in 224 A.D. It was "dedicated . . . with every provision of funds coming from the gods" (τὸ ἐλαιο(τ)ρόπιον σὺν κατασκευῇ ἐκ τῶν θεῶν προσόδων . . . ἀφιερώθη);[60] that is to say, sacred monies from the temple supported the expansion of the cash crop in olive oil as early as the third century A.D. This is an important corrective to the view sometimes expressed that the spread of Christianity was causally linked to economic growth and architectural innovation in the Limestone Massif in the fourth through sixth centuries.[61] The inscription suggests instead that this development originated in pre-Christian times and that the temple treasuries capitalized the growth of the olive-oil industry. To all appearances, the olive press of Kefr Nabo remained in use all through the period of Christianization. No one thought to deface the names of the divinities now become *daimones* under the Christian dispensation. House lintels without crosses persisted at Kefr Nabo until 445/6 A.D.[62] The Christian inscriptions are all quite late. The earliest of these invokes the Trinity and adds: "Through the prayer of St. Acheos" ([δ]ιὰ εὐχῆς τοῦ ἁγίου 'Αχέου).[63] The man was perhaps a local monk who led many villagers from the Semitic divine "triad" to the Christian one. Another Christian inscription of 525/6 written in Syriac mentions the completion of a martyrion by the presbyter Abhā.[64] If H.C. Butler's stylistic arguments are accepted, Kefr Nabo had a fourth-century church.[65] Even so, the suspicion persists that many of the locals offered the first-fruits of the olive harvest to the old gods until the late fifth century, whereupon complete Christianization came with the dispersion of monophysite clergy into the Limestone Massif. The communal use of the olive press, some of whose fluids went as first-fruit offerings to the gods, may have divided Kefr Nabo along religious lines, with the Christians at times refusing cooperation. Augustine, whose congregation at Hippo Regius in Numidia placed a similar reliance on the olive cultivation, sums up the scruples that rustic clergy imposed on their congregations in villages of mixed religious allegiance:[66]

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[56] IGLS 383. PAES III B, 1193. Seimios does not, in fact, belong in the Heliopolitan triad. One scholar has remarked that Seimios was "un ancien Baal coelésyrien, du nature solaire, devenu un dieu de la végétation et du renouveau. . . ." Youssef Hajjar, *Le Triade d'Héliopolis-Baalbek* (Leiden 1977), 456f. Hajjar discusses the other members of this "triad" as well, but his analysis here seems to be more speculative. He suggests that Symbetylos may not in fact be female, there being no serious evidence on this point, and that "Leon" (= "the lion") might be Allāt in theriomorphic guise. *Ibid.*, 155f. Zeus Heliopolitanus turns up in the Antiochene, Apamene, and Emesene. *Ibid.*, 188–94, 197–206. Henri Seyrig, *Antiquités syriennes* 6 (Paris 1966), 90, regards Seimios as most probably an equivalent of Hadad. Cf. *ibid.* 96, n. 3.

[57] IGLS 383. PAES III B, 1193.

[58] IGLS 381. Prentice, PAES III B, 1191. H.C. Butler dates the "temple church" to the fourth century generally by criteria of style. *Early Churches in Syria* (Princeton 1929), 55f.

[59] IGLS 382. PAES III B, 1192.

[60] IGLS 376. PAES III B, 1170.

[61] Liebeschuetz, "Conversion of Syria," 19–21.

[62] IGLS 375, 377. PAES III B, 1171, 1172.

> Likewise, if anything is accepted [for consumption] from a threshing floor or from a wine- or oil-press for sacrifices to *daimones*, and the Christian knows this, he sins if he permits it to be done where he has the power of preventing it. But if he ascertains what has been done, but does not have the power of preventing it, he [may legitimately] make use of the remaining good fruit, whence these acts are to be tolerated, just as we make use of springs from which we know most certainly that water is drawn off for use in sacrifices. The rationale is the same in the baths. For we do not hesitate to draw breath from the air into which we know that smoke goes from all the altars also kindled in behalf of the *daimones*.

The Christian villagers of Ḥass in Djebel Rīḥa found the appropriate solution to the problem by dedicating an oil factory in 372 A.D. with the "One God only" formula at a time when the village was not entirely Christianized (Εἷς Θεὸς μόνος . . . συνετελέσθη τὸ ἐλεοτρ[ι]βῖον).[67] The single Divinity of the new oil press replaced the earlier Semitic Baal and Atargatis in this fashion.

The Christianization of the other villages of the northeast plateau is discernible in the pattern of the "One God" inscriptions.

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[63] IGLS 378. PAES III B, 1173.

[64] *Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904–5 and 1909, Division IV: Semitic Inscriptions, Section B: Syriac Inscriptions* (Leiden 1934), no. 52. Hereinafter cited as Littmann, PAES IV B.

[65] Butler, *Early Churches*, 34.

[66] Augustinus, *Ep. ad Publicolam*, *PL* 33 185.

[67] Infra. Ch. X, Sect. 6. IGLS 1509, 1506. Prentice, AAES III, 152, 154. The latter is dated 378 A.D. and is not discernibly Christian.

The second earliest was incised in August 372 on a church at Fafirtīn: "For Antiochos, Maris (the) *periodeutēs*. One God and his Christ, who helps" ([᾽Επὶ ᾽Αν]τιόχο[υ] τοῦ CMIC[---] Μάρις περιοδευτή[ς]. Εἷς Θεὸς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς αὐτοῦ, ὁ βοηθῶν (Date)).[68] This act connects the Christian *periodeutēs* with one of the earliest Christian communities of the district. The appearance of the same formula at nearby Batuta in 363 perhaps reflects the same thing.[69] There are three other "One God" inscriptions on lintels at three widely scattered villages all dated to 406/7, at Sheikh Sleman, Burdj il-Qās, and Surqanya.[70] Many conversions had evidently been completed just before this date, which must be accepted as the local terminus for the creation of widespread Christian communities in these parts. That found at Sheikh Sleman is of Trinitarian format (Εἷς Θεὼς καὶ Χριστὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ τὼ ῞Αγιον Πνεῦμα) and was perhaps devised to undermine the local Semitic divine "triad". This periodization of c. 363–407 most likely applies to the two "One God" lintels at Burdj Ḥaidar ("(Cross) One God who helps the fatherland for all. . . ."), an argument for the new Christian dispensation of benefits to village society and its fields.[71] A church was built here sometime in the fourth century.[72] A statement of benefits also turns up on an inscription at Baziher ("One God who helps all. Life, health.").[73]

There is one exception to this rule, the village of Simkhār, where the new religion took root at an earlier date. A well-preserved early Christian church here is ascribed to the fourth century.[74] A "One God IXΘYC" inscription dated 349/50 A.D. stands on a house lintel there, with the pre-Christian greeting: "Double to you as many things as you say."[75] It represents a relatively early stage of Christianization, when the older style Hellenic greetings were still considered essential in village life. At another house, two Christian "One God" formulae were added, perhaps a century after its construction, but in the late fourth-century form (c. 363–407, to judge from other local examples): "One God who helps."[76] The householder thought it necessary to raise these testimonials to his conversion despite the fact that the house already had a foundation date of 272/3 A.D. on its lintel. At Simkhār, then, conversions continued between c. 350–400. The householder's two "One God" inscriptions carry over an expression used in the pre-Christian foundation text of 272/3: "May he who wrote (this) be remembered." The villages of the Antiochene did not go over to the new religion en masse, in a single sweeping act of conversion, as Theodoret of Cyrrhus sometimes suggests, but more slowly, by individual households, each of which made its own choice and expressed it on lintels in a familiar way to remind the visitor that the same family possessed the house before and after its conversion.

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[68] IGLS 389. PAES III B, 1199. I have reedited the inscription on the basis of W.K. Prentice' photograph. Prentice' reading of TOVCMIC as τοῦ (ἐπ) ισ[κόπου] is untenable and improbable.

[69] It was erected in behalf of one Marianos and his children by the Christian architects (surprisingly) Mariades and Saakonas. IGLS 391. PAES III B, 1201. Prentice cannot tell if the date should be read as 363 or 563 A.D., but the formula is certainly of common 4th–5th c. usage, and the script is much closer to a 363 date.

[70] IGLS 373, 386, 400. PAES III B, 1189, 1196, 1210.

[71] IGLS 405, 406. PAES III B, 1168, 1169.

[72] Butler, *Early Churches*, 32. A later lintel inscription of 487 A.D. leaves out the "One God" formula in favor of a simple Chi-Rho before the building details, the sign of a more completely Christian society. IGLS 404. PAES III B, 1167.

[73] IGLS 390. PAES III B, 1200.

[74] Butler, *Early Churches*, 29–31. Tchalenko, *Villages antiques*, 2 Pl. IX.

[75] PAES III B, 1206.

The ultimate example of a village going Christian is found at Brād, a large site where the great Julianus basilica, with three aisles, a martyrion, and courtyards, was constructed by c. 399–402.[77] The traces of late fourth-century conversions ("One God and his Christ, who helps Theodotus and his household")[78] and a temple demolition ("(Cross) This conquers." + τοῦτο ν[ικᾶ̣])[79] are in evidence. It was a place capable of large scale communal building projects even in pre-Christian times.[80] All the same, a recent convert is attested in an inscription of August 496 (ἐπὶ Σεργωνα(?) [τοῦ] νεωκτ[ί]στου.[81]

There are, finally, two badly documented sites whose epigraphy indicates Christian building activity in the early sixth century, although earlier dates of Christianization cannot be excluded. At Göl-Djibrin, a Christian church (ναός) was constructed by about 521 A.D.[82] At Kefr Antin, a Christian lintel was erected in 523.[83]

The parts around Djebel Sim'ān were undergoing Christianization between the *termini* 336/7 to 496, to cite the earliest and latest inscriptions that hint at conversions. The main sequence of conversions seems to have come, however, during a more restricted period, between 363 to 407, when the *periodeutai* were active in the countryside and the majority of the "One God" inscriptions was cut. A scattering of later inscriptions (with the formulae "One God" or "the newly created person" on them) suggests that this business was hardly complete by 407. Indeed, the strident character of the "One God" confession down to 407 suggests that many Hellenes lived in the villages then and in the decades after, as does a small number of lintel inscriptions without religious markings done in accordance with the pre-Christian custom of Djebel Sim'ān. Symeon Stylites the Elder's arrival at Telanissos in 409, then, came after the Christian church had established a firm institutional presence with many impressive buildings and presbyters in more than a few villages. One can hardly say what percentage of the rustics had accepted the new religion at that point, my own conjecture being well over fifty percent at the very least. Symeon's miraculous feats and acts of Christianizing rite belonged to the last stages of the transition, and provided a public advertisement of the wealth and persuasive power of the new religious ideas and institutions. The last polytheists trickled in to receive baptism at Telanissos and the other local churches through the last decades of the fifth century. When compared with other parts of the Roman East, Djebel Sim'ān saw this transition come off rather quickly.

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[76] IGLS 393-395. PAES III B, 1203-1205.

[77] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 2, Pl. XI.

[78] IGLS 360. PAES III B, 1186.

[79] IGLS 365. PAES III B, 1181.

[80] Cf. IGLS 359 (=PAES III B, 1175) (207/8 A.D.), where the locals were aided by the residents of three other villages, Kefr Nabo, Rhezitha, and one other.

[81] IGLS 372. PAES III B, 1177.

[82] IGLS 355.

[83] IGLS 392. PAES III B, 1202.

II. The Antiochene: Djebel Ḥalaqah

Djebel Ḥalaqah lies directly to the south of Djebel Sim'ān. It is not a massif, but the oval-shaped high ground that surrounds the Dāna plain on all sides.[84] Numerous monastic houses came into existence here during the fifth and sixth centuries. Among these was the habitation established by Ammianus near Teledan (present-day Tell-'Ade).[85] One would have expected Djebel Ḥalaqah and the Dāna plain to have been Christianized at a relatively early date, but the epigraphy does not entirely support such a construction.

The dominant cult in pre-Christian times was certainly that of Zeus Madbachos and Selmanes at the temenos atop Djebel Sheikh Berekāt at the northern tip of the plain. Another temple lay atop the small eminence called Djebel Srîr at the southern end of the plain. There was, finally, a third temple in the village of Sermada.

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[84] The features of Djebel Ḥalaqah are best studied using the map in Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 2, Pl. CCIV. See also Pl. XXV and XLI (northern part).

[85] Supra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 2.

The deities worshipped at the last two sites are unknown. Their cult had fallen into decline by the end of the fourth century A.D., but many pagans still lived in the villages of Djebel Ḥalaqah at that time, as the epigraphy suggests. It will be necessary first to consider the villages lying in the Dāna plain, and then those on the northwestern ridge of Djebel Ḥalaqah.

The villages of the plain show surprisingly late dates of Christianization, but the inscriptions are sparse here in comparison to Djebel Sim'ān. Teledan, the most famous site in the Dāna plain thanks to Theodoret's account of Ammianus the solitary, has no inscription of any real interest.[86] The next village to the south, Hezreh, provides a striking exception to the general Christianization taking place elsewhere in the Limestone Massif in the fifth century. Two house inscriptions cut by the artisan Herodis in 480/1 A.D. lack crosses. Herodis and the householder seem both to have been Hellenes, for the patronymic of the former seems to have been Phaladonias, derived from the Semitic divine name Aphlad.[87] An illiterate and undated "One God" inscription marks the beginnings of Christianization at Hezreh, which seems to have come in the last decades of the fifth century.[88] Such is the chronology suggested by the remains of Dāna, the next village to the south. The only significant pre-Christian inscription here mentions the consecration of a pagan tomb in 324 A.D.[89] The epigraphic record is then completely blank until 483/4, when a "One God" formula was cut on the lintel of the village church ("One God and his Christ and the Holy Spirit helps.").[90] It celebrates the reorganization of the peasantry under the monotheism of the new religion. A later inscription suggests recent baptisms as well: "(Cross) Christ help everyone! Eusebius having renewed (it)" (494 A.D.).[91] The "having renewed" (ἀνανεώσας Εὐσέβιος) is perhaps a double entendre, indicating the raising of the lintel, but also suggesting baptism.[92] An even later inscription (550 A.D.) reflects this and other preoccupations: "(Cross) When the cross is present, the enemy has no strength."[93] It reflects in equal measure concerns about the *daimones* thought to cause disease and hardship, and the Persian invasion of 540.

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[86] IGLS 479, 480.
[87] IGLS 496, 497.
[88] IGLS 498.
[89] IGLS 491.
[90] IGLS 490.
[91] IGLS 495.
[92] G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford 1961), 114.
[93] IGLS 493. Prentice, AAES III, 91.

Farther to the south lay the ancient village of Tillokbara or Tillokbarinōn (present-day Tell ʻAqibrīn), the closest site to the pagan temple on Djebel Srîr. We gain rare insight into pre-Christian notions of the afterlife in a sarkophagos inscription of 222 A.D.:[94]

> I, Gaianos, son of Gaianos, while still alive and present, made provision for an eternal dwelling-place. I made it long enough for myself when death lay close at hand.

A notion of the tomb as a house for aeons to come (ἐωνίου ο[ἴκ]ου) formed a part of polytheistic belief. The first impact of Christianity came in the late fourth century when the deacon Cyril performed some undisclosed building work in behalf of his bishop Magnus of Chalkis sub Belo, which lay on the plain to the east of the Limestone Massif.[95] The destruction of the temple on Djebel Srîr probably took place at this time, but Tillokbariniōn itself was not demonstrably Christian until the sixth century.[96]

Sermada, which lies at the southwesternmost point of the Dāna plain, stands in sharp contrast to the other villages of the valley by virtue of its early Christianization. The place had a temple (ναός), but the name of the god is missing from its fragmentary building inscription.[97] An ancient *nekropolis* is in evidence as well.[98] Christianity first appears with a house lintel having a very early "One God and his Christ" inscription (341/2 A.D.).[99] It is difficult to judge by how much this phenomenon was an isolated case at Sermada. A martyrion was eventually built here, for a *paramonarios* is recorded to have renewed a church building of some kind. Unfortunately the inscription is undatable.[100] The Christian burial of a certain Eutyches took place in 436/7.[101] There is, however, a later lintel inscription without a cross (482/3 A.D.).[102] All things considered, it seems that a small Christian shrine was built and staffed in the fifth century to accommodate a small number of believers in Sermada, but that the village lacked a sufficient number of adherents to the new religion to justify sending in a presbyter and building a church.

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[94] IGLS 505 (ed. pr.).

[95] IGLS 508.

[96] Cf. IGLS 506. PAES III B, 1112. The inscription has a cross and the omicron-upsilon ligature (6th c.).

[97] Prentice, AAES III, 81.

[98] Prentice, AAES III, 86, 87. from 112 A.D. and 132–41 A.D., respectively.

[99] IGLS 518. Prentice, AAES III, 78.

[100] IGLS 511. Prentice, AAES III, 85.

[101] IGLS 512. Prentice, AAES III, 79.

[102] IGLS 514. Prentice, AAES III, 80.

None of the villages of the Dāna plain except Sermada had churches and clergy in the fifth century. The epigraphic record suggests quite strongly that Christianization began here in earnest only in the last two decades of that century. The valley provides a notable exception to the rule that lowlanders tended to accept the new religion before mountain dwellers. The memory of the Baals and Astartes will have lingered among the people of these villages for nearly a century after the three temples surrounding the plain were dismantled. It is quite evident as well that Ammianus' monastery near Teledan had little impact on the Christianization of the Dāna plain through the later fifth century. This is true of Symeon Stylites the Elder as well, whose influence extended mostly to the villages in the immediate vicinity of the monastery at Djebel Si-m'ān and to the great cities of the Roman East, but not to the Dāna plain. Theodoret does not claim a role for Ammianus' monastery in the Christianization of Syria, and the epigraphy bears this out graphically.

In the high ground on the northwest bank of Djebel Ḥalaqah, Christianization came much earlier. The village of Ksedjbeh saw the construction of a church in 414/5 and its occupation by the presbyter Bizzos, who was evidently bilingual in Aramaic and Greek.[103] There is evidence of earlier Judaism or Christianity in the house lintel of a certain Samuel. It bears no cross.[104] Another village, Serdjibleh, acquired a small single chamber church only in the sixth century.[105] As the first Christian inscriptions do not turn up here until 471 at the hands of Nonnus the housebuilder, it is difficult to put Serdjibleh's Christianization before the later fifth century.[106] The villagers were still converting to the new religion in the sixth century, as the "One God" inscription of Eustathius the *numerarius* (a type of public accountant) reveals.[107] Elsewhere the new religion came at the late date characteristic of the Dāna plain. Burdaqli seems to have been a veterans' settlement. A tomb was made for the pagan Valerius Romulus, who had served in Pannonia Superior, and his wife in 310 A.D.[108] The first Christian inscription, cut on a lintel in 497, reflects a martial spirit and recent acceptance of the new religion:[109]

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[103] IGLS 509. Prentice, AAES III, 73.

[104] IGLS 510. PAES III B, 1091.

[105] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 2, Pl. X, XIII. Butler, *Early Churches*, 59.

[106] IGLS 486, 487. Prentice, AAES III, 93, 94.

[107] IGLS 485. Prentice, AAES III, 95. It has the characteristic omicron-upsilon ligature (ȣ) that is first attested c. 500. Cf. the undatable "One God who helps" inscription, IGLS 484=Prentice, AAES III, 96.

> (Cross) We have put on Christ. We have been armed with the breastplate. The Holy Spirit is with us. Whom shall we fear? (This lintel) was renewed by the command of holy God.

As the army was not generally Christianized until the later fifth century, this inscription might be taken as a sign of the first stage in the religious transition at Burdaqli.[110] There is, finally, the village of Kfellusīn, which lies to the north of Serdjibleh. At Kfellusīn is a colonnade inscribed with the Trisagion prayer in 473. It perhaps belonged to a church building.[111] Yet there is a later house lintel of 487 lacking any Christian symbol.[112] The first cleric, Sabatios the deacon, is attested only in 522.[113] The Christianization of the northwestern shoulder of Djebel Ḥalaqah was long protracted, but this stretch of country seems nevertheless seems to have become largely Christian before the reign of Justinian the Great (527–565). The few Christians in the vicinity will have gone to the church at Ksedjbeh for 414/5 onward. Only in the sixth century was the additional small church at Serdjibleh built. A third church at Deir Rehshān staffed by Maras the presbyter was also a sixth-century foundation.[114] The Christian congregations were still quite new even in the 520's.

To summarize, Djebel Ḥalaqah resisted the impact of Christianity for approximately a century longer than the villages of Djebel Sim'ān and those on nearby Djebel Barisha, as will be seen in the next section. It should be quite obvious from this that the agricultural communities of the Limestone Massif were quite inward-looking in religious matters. The Dāna plain set the standard for its own immediate vicinity. Its people will have continued to invoke the old gods, whose high places rose visibly around the skyline of the plain where the monks dwelt passively. Symeon Stylites the Elder had no effect on this at all, for it was only after his death in

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[108] IGLS 523. PAES III B, 1107.

[109] IGLS 524. PAES III B, 1108.

[110] There is also a Christian lintel of 517. IGLS 525. PAES III B, 1109. On the army, see infra, Ch. XI, Sect. 1.

[111] IGLS 482. PAES III B, 1103.

[112] IGLS 483. PAES III B, 1104.

[113] IGLS 481. PAES III B, 1105.

[114] IGLS 489. The later style square uncials with the invocation of the Mother of God put the church in the sixth century.

459/60 that Christian inscriptions began to turn up in the villages. The rustics clearly preferred their own time-tested prayers and rituals to the seeming innovations of the new religion.

III. The Antiochene: Djebel Barīsha

Djebel Barīsha lies to the west and southwest of Djebel Ḥalaqah, and south of the Antioch to Beroia sub Belo highway that bisects the Dāna plain. Djebel Barīsha was in consequence more susceptible to Christian Antiochene influences at an earlier date. The area of habitation consists of some fifteen densely concentrated villages and has many dated inscriptions. The Christianization of these villages began well before the reign of Julian the Apostate (361–363) in the two larger villages of Babisqa and Dar Qīta. Elsewhere it was more protracted, but not nearly so much as it was in Djebel Ḥalaqah. Let us begin with the larger villages first, as they each have distinctive epigraphic histories.

Dar Qīta, whose ancient name is unknown, was one of the largest and wealthiest villages of the Limestone Massif. No pagan temple has been discovered there. The only dated pagan inscription of relevance was cut on House 10 in 295/6 A.D. ("As many things as you say, it shall be double for you.").[115] After that comes a series of eleven "One God" inscriptions running from 339/40 to 515. Ongoing conversions and local fashion seem to have dictated this theme. It is quite impossible to distinguish one factor from the other in Dar Qīta's epigraphy.[116] The earliest Christian influence on Dar Qīta came from outside the village at the hands of a certain Flavius Eusebius, who had served as *singularius*, a subclerical grade of official with the Praetorian Prefect. The man seems to have paved the agora of the village:[117]

> One God and Christ, be a helper to Flavius Eusebius, son of Cyril, the buyer (and) builder. He bought it in 339/40 A.D. and built on it with the help of God in 350.

He built a gate in 355 with the aid of his wife's funds:[118]

> One God, who helps Flavius Eusebius the *singularius* and his wife Alexandra Kalopodina. The gate was built. . . .

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[115] IGLS 550. PAES III B, 1073.
[116] IGLS 535–552.
[117] IGLS 542. PAES III B, 1074.
[118] IGLS 543. PAES III B, 1075.

Flavius Eusebius had apparently acquired holdings in the village which formed a single estate and retired there at the end of his civil service career. He unquestionably dominated the affairs of the village between 339–355, during which time it grew in population. Eusebius had evidently accepted Christianity during the later years of Constantine the Great in the East, and took the fashionable *praenomen* Flavius as the sign of his politics and religious faith, and then brought it with him to Dar Qīta as its first Christian citizen. His frank affirmation of monotheism in these early times perhaps prodded some of his fellow villagers to consider conversion, but firm evidence of its effect is lacking in the epigraphy of Dar Qīta for another three generations. It was only in the first quarter of the fifth century that Dar Qīta acquired ecclesiastical institutions. Until that time the *periodeutai* of the patriarchal see of Antioch will have ministered to Eusebius' family.

The first church of Dar Qīta, that of St. Paul and Moses, was erected in 418 and staffed by the presbyter Diodoros.[119] It is quite possible that the village became an estate of the patriarchate of Antioch by legacy and that domiciles were let to settlers from the Dāna plain who accepted baptism into the local church. It is otherwise difficult to explain the sequence of "One God" inscriptions which turn up on house lintels and gates in 451/2, 456, 462, and 485.[120] The lintel of a church courtyard built in 431 has the Trinitarian "One God" formula ("One God and his Christ and the Holy Spirit.").[121] The place gives the impression of being part of an eccelsiastical estate that served as the mecca of Christianization for the surrounding countryside. This argument is clinched by the very late inscription on the baptistry added to the church of Moses and St. Paul in 515/6 ("(Cross) One God and his Christ, help the cosmos!").[122] It is one of the very few baptistries attested in the Limestone Massif. There was quite evidently much work still to be done with the adult polytheists of the area in 515/6. The repeated advertisement of Christian monotheism makes no sense in the long term unless a partly polytheistic milieu be supposed to have existed down to this time. The formula came into use again when the church of St. Sergius was erected in 537 A.D.[123] A baptistry was added to this church in 566/7. By that time the local college of presbyters had grown to five, all of whom seem to have been bilingual speakers of Aramaic and Greek,[124] an unprecedented number for a village with only two or three churches.[125] The use of the "One God" formula no longer seemed necessary by that time.[126]

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[119] IGLS 535. PAES III B, 1076.
[120] IGLS 540, 538, 547, 544. PAES III B, 1080, 1081, 1082, 1089.
[121] IGLS 536. PAES III B, 1077.
[122] IGLS 537. PAES III B, 1085.
[123] IGLS 545.

What can be concluded about the Christianization of the Limestone Massif from this? Quite clearly the "One God" formula had passed out of local usage between the work on St. Sergius' church in 537 and its baptistry in 566/7. The number of pagans coming in for baptism quite obviously went into radical decline sometime after 537. It may have been before 551, when a fortified tower was built "in the name of the holy Trinity."[127] It seems evident that the district around Dar Qīta was thought finally to have been purged of "Hellenic error" towards the middle of the sixth century, a perfectly acceptable date from the standpoint of the epigraphy and of the literary sources.[128] The number of rustic pagans was thus still noticeably significant in 537, but by 566/7 no remnant seems to have survived.

The relationship between the construction of baptistries and the first stages of Christianization is dramatically revealed at the other large village of Babisqa, which lies about two kilometers east-southeast of Dar Qīta. Babisqa had its own temple, but the name of the principal deity is unknown.[129] Spolia from this building were built into the East Church or Marcianus basilica, whose first lintel was laid in 401.[130] Among the spolia from the temple are pier capitals and a block with an inscription of 143 A.D.[131] The work on the Marcianus basilica went on until 407/8.[132] The deacon Eusebis supervised the work locally in behalf of the presbyter Marcianus, who served as the architect.[133] Regular clergy were thus in place by 401, but this was not the earliest stage of Christianization at

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[124] Their names were John, Sergius, Danos, Bachchos, and Ramlys. IGLS 544. PAES III B, 1089.

[125] A third church, that of the Trinity, is undated, but the fact of its having a Syriac inscriptions suggests a sixth-century date.

[126] The hypothesis that Dar Qīta was part of a patriarchal estate is reinforced by the citation of emperor Justin II (565–578) and patriarch Anastasius (559–70, 593–98) as donors of the baptistry of St. Sergius in IGLS 546.

[127] Prentice, AAES III, 60.

[128] This is roughly consistent with the chronology for the Christianization of western Asia Minor given by John of Ephesus in the *Lives of the Eastern Saints*. The final stages of the process are said to have lasted between c. 536–566. Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 330f.

[129] PAES III B, 1092.

[130] IGLS 559. PAES III B, 1096.

[131] Butler, *Early Churches*, 48f.

[132] IGLS 557, 558. PAES III B, 1097, 1098.

[133] IGLS 559. PAES III B, 1096.

Babisqa. That came a decade earlier with the construction of a baptistry in 390. The presbyter Kyris supervised the work and cut the inscription with its militant assertion of Christian monotheism: "One God who helps us and his Christ. Amen. Chi-Rho. Mar Kyris the presbyter made it."[134] The Marcianus church was built subsequently, being *added* to this baptistry, whose foundation inscription takes account of the polytheistic ethos.

The house lintel of one of the first families at Babisqa to accept the new religion has survived. It is a unique document:[135]

> Cherillos son of Gabronos, Eusebis the architect, and Athenis, in the year 437, on the seventh day of the month Xandikos, Jacob son (of Cherillos). (= April 389 A.D.).

The lintel has various crudely cut Christian symbols on both sides of the inscription that look almost like graffiti, with two Chi-Rho's, a cross inscribed in a circle, and an eight-petalled cross in a square. These signs were added later, because one of them is cut over the first word of the inscription. They were quite clearly intended to advertise to conversion of the household by gaudy display. The family will have been initiated into the new religion sometime after the completion of the Marcianus church baptistry in the following year, 390. These folk all had pagan or neutral Aramaic and Hellenic names except the son Jacob (Ἰάκουβος), whose name possibly had some currency outside Christian or Judaic circles. No Christians turn up before this date (389 A.D.) at Babisqa. The lintel of an earlier house dated 352 A.D. need not be taken as Christian. Erected by a certain Aurelius Antiochus, it is ornamented with an eight-petalled cross inscribed in a circle that is certainly not Christian.[136] There is little reason to doubt that the village was largely Christian from the early fifth century onward, what with the disappearance of the "One God" motif after 390. A presbyter named Moreos served the village in 480.[137]

The village of Baqirḥa lies not far south of Dar Qīta. The temenos used by these two villages lay atop an eminence called Burdj Baqirḥa and contained the temple of the local Baal who went by the name of Zeus Bōmos the Great, the Hearkener (Δϊὶ Βωμῷ μεγάλῳ ἐπηκόῳ).[138] A *nekropolis* grew up on the hill near the shrine in pre-Christian times.[139] The cult seems not to have survived long after the death of Julian the Apostate, for a deacon named Mikalos resided in his own house at Baqirḥa village by 384.[140] The local church staffed by the presbyter Symeon was not built until 491 or 501. Its lintel bears a Trinitarian formula with the expression "One God".[141] It therefore seems that recognizable numbers of polytheists still lived in and around Baqirḥa at the end of the fifth century, just as they did near Dar Qīta. Here at least we know the name of the divinity they worshipped.

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[134] IGLS 561. PAES III B, 1095.

[135] IGLS 555. PAES III B, 1094.

[136] IGLS 554. PAES III B, 1093.

[137] IGLS 562. PAES III B, 1099.

[138] IGLS 569. Prentice, AAES III, 48. This divinity is the same as Zeus Madbachos.

A similar deduction is borne out from the inscriptions of four villages around the northern and western fringes of Djebel Barīsha. At Khirbet Tezīn, a house was erected with no cross on its lintel in 402.[142] Its Christian church was built only in 585.[143] Sometime during the era of Christianization a large, rude cross was cut on an inscription honoring the emperor Marcus Aurelius near Qasr el-Banat on the Antioch-Beroia highway.[144] An undated church was built in this village, probably during the fifth century.[145] At Khirbet el-Khatib, an imperial count possibly named Flavius Paulus funded the construction of a church in 473/4. It may have stood on an estate that he owned.[146] To the southwest of the Baal temple at Burdj Baqirḥa lay the village of Bashmili. Its baptistry was erected only in 536/7 and lacks the "One God" formula on its foundation inscription.[147] By that time there were perhaps few pagan rustics in the area. The northern, heavily populated part of Djebel Barīsha was thus being Christianized throughout the fifth century. It was only at the large villages of Dar Qīta and Babisqa that the new religion had taken root before 400.[148]

Djebel Barīsha has a number of small plains lying one south of the next along the eastern part of the massif. These seem to have been Christianized generally during the fifth century. Temples have been identified at Dar Seta and at the ancient Ichchēnis (Ιχχηνις, present-day Meʿez). At Dar Seta a house lintel was erected in 412 with the words "One God who helps all" on it.[149] Conversions were thus going on in the early fifth century. The divinity of the temple at ancient Ichchēnis is unknown, but the village was probably being Christianized around the same time. A stone basin has been discovered there with the quasi-Constantinian victory formula: "This (cross) conquers!"[150] A presbyter possibly named Euphremios supervised the construction of a martyrion with the help of a woman of Apamea named "Gidra".[151] The rounded uncial letters of the lintel inscription suggest a fifth century date. Ichchēnis was perhaps an estate owned by this "Gidra". It is harder to trace the Christianization of Kafr 'Arūq, but this too lies in the fifth century.[152] The emperor Justin I subsidized the construction of a martyrion of Sts. Eias, Andrew, and Dometios "for us" in 521/2. The receivers were quite obviously Christians and presumably resided on an imperial estate.[153]

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[139] IGLS 570. Prentice, AAES III, 49.
[140] IGLS 568. Prentice, AAES III, 50.
[141] IGLS 566. Prentice, AAES III, 51.
[142] IGLS 534. PAES III B, 1102.
[143] IGLS 533. Prentice, AAES III, 54.
[144] Prentice, AAES III, 74.
[145] IGLS 531. Prentice, AAES III, 76.
[146] IGLS 553. PAES III B, 1101.
[147] IGLS 571. Prentice, AAES III, 46.
[148] There were also temples at Benebil and Bashmili. These shrines have been identified by building fragments, but not by inscriptions. Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 2, Pl. VII.

The western parts of Djebel Barīsha by comparison began accepting Christianity at quite an early date, undoubtedly because of their relative proximity to Antioch. The best example is the large village of Kokanāya in the southwestern part of the massif. The introduction of the new religion came early in the reign of emperor Constantius II. The latest inscription without a cross was cut on a pedestal in 335 A.D. and later built into a Christian church.[154] After this, militant Christian inscriptions become quite common, beginning with a house lintel of 349: "One God only" (εἷς Θεὸς μόνος).[155] A Christian named Eusebius or his relatives reused a pagan tomb for his burial in 369. Lest his interrment be confused with a pagan one, they wrote a long Christian title:[156]

(Cross) For Eusebius. (Cross) A Christian.
(Cross) Glory to the Father and Son and Holy Spirit.

This identification (+Εὐσεβίῳ+Χριστιανῷ+) would have been unnecessary except that the local pagans had continued to use the *nekropolis*. Christians were therefore something of an exception at Kokanāya in 369, but this changed in about two decades. A house lintel with "One God and his Christ" was erected by Damas the housebuilder in 378.[157] The lack of monotheistic formulae after this time suggests that the village was mostly or entirely Christianized in the decade immediately thereafter. The transition is marked by an undated church cornice with the affirmation: "One God who completed it. Magnus erected it" (ἷς Θεὸς ὁ τελιώσας. [M]άγνος ἀνήγιρε).[158] The personal name "Magnus" is typical of the pre-Christian Latinate nomenclature of the area, and so this inscription marks the moment of transition quite precisely. From 384 onward the "One God" is dropped from the Christian inscriptions, but the "erected" (ἀνήγιρεν) is retained as a regular feature. It was written the same way over a tomb in 384 and on a house lintel in 431: "The power of God and Christ erected it."[159] By using the disappearance of the "One God" formula as the criterion and the "erected" as the element of continuity, it seems quite clear that the village became mostly Christian between 378 and 384. The Magnus inscription apparently falls between these *termini.*

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[149] IGLS 605. Prentice, AAES III, 16.

[150] IGLS 583.

[151] IGLS 586. The readings are somewhat doubtful.

[152] Cf. the invocation of the Trinity in IGLS 587. Its rounded uncials suggest a fifth-century date.

[153] IGLS 589.

[154] IGLS 600.

[155] IGLS 596. Prentice, AAES III, 33.

[156] IGLS 598.

There is less to be said of the other sites in western Djebel Barīsha, except that the Christian inscriptions all come quite early. At Ma'arrāta (or Ma'arrāt Cheulf) on a plain below the west face of the massif, a fragmentary lintel inscription has "Jesus Christ" and is dated 336/7.[160] At Ṭurlaha the lintel of a large building has "Christ help!" in 363/4.[161] And at 'Arshīn near the southwest tip of the massif, a sarkophagos cover has the words: "One God and his Christ, the help of the unfortunate man!" in 363.[162] The Christianization of western Djebel Barīsha thus began well before the demise of Julian the Apostate.

It should be obvious from this analysis that the progress of the new religion in the different parts of Djebel Barīsha depended on localized conditions such as easy access to Antioch and the outside world generally, the ownership of land, and the cohesiveness of village society in the face of external pressure for religious change. The pace of Christianization varied throughout the massif, but the process was very nearly complete in some localities by c. 400.

IV. The Antiochene. The Orontes Basin

The "Orontes basin" for the purposes of discussion here includes Daphne and the three mountain chains of the Limestone Massif that rise immediately to the east of the river. They lie in staggered sequence: Djebel Wastani in the southwest hard against the course of the Orontes; Djebel Duaili in the center; and Djebel il-A'la to the northeast facing Djebel Barīsha. The epigraphic remains in this group of hills are sparse by comparison with the rest of the Antiochene, but are nevertheless very important.

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[157] IGLS 595. Prentice, AAES III, 35.

[158] IGLS 599.

[159] IGLS 602 and 597.

[160] IGLS 594.

[161] Prentice, AAES III, 43.

[162] IGLS 621.

The most important Hellenic shrine of the Orontes basin was of course that of Apollo at Daphne, a suburb of Antioch to the south of the city as the river flows on to the sea. The destruction of the temenos in the fourth century is well-known and need not detain us here.[163] More to the point is the religious allegiance of the wealthy Antiochenes who lived there. The useful inscriptions are few and none can be dated except by letter forms. It is best to put two important Christian inscriptions in the second half of the fourth century. The first bears the formula: "(Cross) One God and his Christ who help Romyllianos with his wife and children," a prayer offering. His Latinate name suggests a conversion between 360–400.[164] The other Christian text is the funerary inscription of a certain Kalliopios. He was probably a Hellene whose family, or who himself, converted to the new religion around the same time. Libanius' letters mention five persons of this name, including his disciple Kalliopios son of Bassos, who died in 364. One of the others was a city councillor.[165] The Christian Kalliopios' family was well educated and expressed its hope for his immortality in mildly Homeric language. The inscription runs:[166]

> Here lies Kalliopios, who lived for twenty-six years. He had quite a faithful soul and with prayers regularly praised God, the giver of life to mortals who has provided you with a city in the sky.

These sentiments are reminiscent of those expressed in the Athenian inscriptions of the same period.[167] The Christian Antiochenes of Daphne thus had much in common with their coreligionists in Athens and Aphrodisias.

The Orontes basin was rapidly Christianized in the late fourth century, but nevertheless contains an inscription commemorating one of the latest temple restorations known. The work was done by the highpriest (ἀρχιε[ρεύς]) and city councillors (β[ο]υ{λευτ]αί) of Touron (present-day il-Ḥoṣn), a small town in the Djebel Duaili, in 367/8. The restorations to the text are in some instances problematical:[168]

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[163] Deichmann, "Kirchen in Heiligtümern," 116. Cf. Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 22.12–13, etc.

[164] IGLS 991.

[165] J.H.G. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch* (Oxford 1972), 176, 180.

[166] IGLS 1030.

[167] Supra, Ch. IV, Sect. 1.

> For good luck. The five (?) city councillors of Touron, in completing (?) (their duty) to the ancestral Zeus, Zeus Korypheos, according to command (a small portion (?)) with their ready hands, restored the propylon and stoa and apse of the doorway *and the images*, in the time of Aurelius Marimineos (?) the high priest in the year 416 (of the Antiochene era).

Aurelius Marimineos (Αὐριλ(ίου) Μ[αριμ]ινέου) was the *archihiereus* of Antioch established under the Julianic scheme of having high priests in provincial capitals and ordinary priests in the cities. Touron was evidently not recognized as an urban corporation, for no local priest is named. Aurelius Marimineos thus continued to exercise direction over the rural temples and cults of the Antiochene in accordance with the tolerant policy of the coemperor Valens, who did not initially overturn the recent arrangements made by Julian the Apostate in the Roman East.[169] The word "images" is heavily restored (τὰς ε[ἰκ]ό[νας]), but it has nothing against it, as imperial edicts long after this date confirm the survival of cult effigies in their temples.[170] There were plenty of city councillors who remained Hellenes after 367/8 as well.

The temple at Touron was eventually closed. The *terminus post quem* for this event is provided by the spolia built into the Christian church on the site that include dated inscriptions, the latest being a building inscription of 396 A.D.[171] The monks that Libanius loathed and feared so much did not reach this temple in his lifetime, as he is thought to have died in 393.[172] The divinity named in the inscription, the ancestral Zeus Koryphaios, was of course the Baal of the local high place, and is probably identical to the Baal worshipped at Koryphē (present-day Djebel Sheikh Berekāt) in Djebel Sim'ān under the name of Zeus Madbachos.[173] One of the inscriptions built into the church contains an apparent reference to this divinity in 351 A.D., quite a late date for such testimonials. It has no cross and affirms: "The only lord, the immortal" (ὡ κύριως μονός. ὡ ἀθάνατος).[174] Zeus Koryphaios was the sole lord of this temenos until after 396, the Greek *kyrios* being a literal translation of the Aramaic *rab*. The inscription provides an important witness for the *local Semitic polytheistic origin* of the late "One God only" formula that turns up in the Christian inscriptions of the Limestone Massif.[175]

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[168] IGLS 652.

[169] Supra, Ch. II, n. 46. The inscription confirms Theodoret of Cyrrhus on this point.

[170] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 2 passim. Cf. esp. *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.12, *prooem.* and 1–2. Also: *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.8.

[171] IGLS 655.

[172] Liebeschuetz, *Antioch* 6.

[173] Supra, Ch. X, Sect. 1, and n. 138.

[174] IGLS 653.

The personal names of the residents of Touron were mostly Hellenic through the end of the fourth century. Most of them are attested in inscriptions with the recurrent verb "he made" (ἐποίησεν) or "they made" (ἐπόησαν (sic)),[176] many of them built into the church. This recurrence suggests votive offerings, *that is sacrifices*, to Zeus Koryphaios. We do not know the names of the town councillors of Touron who refurbished the temple in 367/8, but some of the persons named in the various inscriptions must have been locals. Most have Hellenic, Latinate, or ethnic pagan names. Among these was a certain Hēdēmōn, who made the last recorded offering in 396.[177] Others were Flavius Theodoros and his son Rōmylos (a local variant of Romulus?), who saluted the Baal as "the only lord, the immortal" in 351.[178] The father's prayer reveals that not everyone who took the Constantinian *praenomen* became a Christian.

The temple became a mecca as well for pagan soldiers serving in the imperial guards formations attached to the coemperor Valens in Antioch and others. Among these was a soldier of Illyrian extraction named Taulas serving with the palatine legion "the divinely honored Ioviani" (τôν θεο(τίμων) Ἰοβηνῶν) who visited Touron in 364/5.[179] Another group appeared on the scene in 395. They came from a formation of *lanciarii* (another palatine legion) whose names are recorded as "Akylas, Antiochos, of the sons of Domnios (?), Domnionos, and all the divinely honored *lanciarii*."[180] It is quite significant that the officers sacrificed for their men, as it proves the existence of many pagans in the elite guards formations. These offerings prove the truth of the complaint constantly reiterated in the imperial edicts about persons who continued to slip away to rural temples and perform sacrifices.[181] This went on at

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[175] Infra, Appendix V.

[176] IGLS 653–656.

[177] IGLS 655.

[178] IGLS 653.

[179] IGLS 656. Cf. Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 53, etc.

[180] IGLS 654. Cf. Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 52–55. The restoration "sons of Domnios" given in IGLS is certainly incorrect. The men named were evidently his officers.

[181] Activities such as this are clearly alluded to in a law of 399 addressed to the Praetorian Prefect of Oriens. *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.16. The law is practically synchronous with the last days of the temple in question, and its destruction may be directly related to action pursuant to this.

Touron until 396, and perhaps for years to come. The site lacks Christian inscriptions, the sole monument to the new religion being the church. It was probably staffed by a monastic *paramonarios* who had experiences not unlike those endured by Thalelios and the other monks who turn up in Theodoret's *Historia Philotheos*.

The best documented village in the Orontes basin is Djuwaniyeh in eastern Djebel A'la. Signs of Christianization begin here begin in the post-Julianic years[182] with a Christian inscription of 374: "One God who helps those who fear him."[183] There are many "One God" inscriptions in the village, but only one other of them is dated, and that to 398 ("One God only, who helps all his friends").[184] One of the other inscriptions on a house lintel gives the names of the householders, Domnos, Eusebius, Maron, and Alexandra, who were recent converts to judge from their Latinate, Aramaic, and non-theophoric Greek names. The inscription is written in early square uncials and thus belongs c. 380–420.[185] We may take c. 420 as the latest possible date for the Christianization of Djuwaniyeh, which is thus quite typical for the district. The only known church here was the martyrion of St. Stephen the protomartyr, commemorated by boundary stones (ὅροι) in 554.[186]

Kwaro at the southern tip of Djebel Wustaneh was Christianized somewhat earlier. It seems to have been nothing more than an ancient *nekropolis*. The "One God" inscriptions begin with a funerary text of 361/2 (Εἷς Θεὸς μόνος ΙΧΘΥC).[187] The locals were still accepting the new religion c. 380–420, as another tomb with the same formula indicates. It identifies the dead as Aptaios, Boalas, Marion, and Dometios, a familiar set of late pagan-early Christian names.[188] There is also a comparatively late pagan tomb built by a certain Archas in 359. The Christian Alpha-Chi-Rho-Omega on the stone does not seem to be part of the original inscription, and so was added later, probably by family members who had in the meantime become Christian.[189] The "One God" formula over the door of the tomb of 361/2 seems to have been dictated also by an urgent concern about monotheism.[190] The site has no attested church or martyrion. Its early date of Christianization, prior to the patriarchate of Flavian of Antioch (381–404) resulted from its proximity to the Orontes valley and the need of villagers in neighboring places for an exclusively Christian site for burying their dead.

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[182] The tomb of Antiochus built in 340 lack a cross. IGLS 612. Prentice, AAES III, 20.

[183] IGLS 611. Prentice, AAES III, 21.

[184] IGLS 617. Cf. also IGLS 614, 615, 619.

[185] IGLS 616.

[186] IGLS 618, 620.

[187] IGLS 662.

[188] IGLS 659.

[189] PAES III B, 1069. The editors of IGLS 660 are quite skeptical about W.K. Prentice' restoration.

There is little else to be said about the Orontes basin. The *periodeutai* of Antioch were certainly active in this region.[191] The Christianization of other villages like Derkoush lying hard against the Orontes came after 352, when a pagan burial was recorded.[192] While the three mountains of this area are poorly documented in the epigraphy, they decisively contradict Libanius' account of the monks' forcible Christianization of the parts lying closer to Antioch. The process lay in the hands of the regular clergy, and was begun in many places before the patriarchate of Flavian. At least one rural temple, that found at Touron, remained a site where Hellenes continued to sacrifice until at least 396.

V. The Antiochene: The North Slope of Djebel Rīḥa (Djebel Zāwiyeh)

G. Tchalenko has demonstrated that the southern border of the Antiochene, that is First Syria, enclosed only the northern slopes of Djebel Rīḥa.[193] To the south lay the Apamene, or the parts of Second Syria administered from the provincial capital at Apamea. The inscriptions above and below the boundary are dated by different local eras. Those of the Antiochene used the era of Antioch, which began in 48 B.C., whereas those of the Apamene employed the Seleucid era, which began in 311 B.C. This administrative fact enables us to judge whether the different attitudes prevailing towards Christianization in Antioch and Apamea had any appreciable effect on the speed with which the different *territoria* were Christianized. Let us first consider the Antiochene portion of Djebel Rīḥa.

Northern Djebel Rīḥa was sparsely populated in comparison with the parts to the south. Only one pagan temple has been identified, that at Urim el-Djūz. Only building fragments survive.[194] It seems that the population of this site remained partly or largely pagan until the mid-fifth century, as a tomb without crosses has the dates 354–444 A.D. on it.[195] An early "One God" inscription is badly damaged ([Εἶ]ς ‹Θε›ὼς μόνο]ς) and is not incontestably Christian. It belongs to 376/7 A.D., but has a six-pointed cross or star on it, suggesting Jewish authorship. Nor are the names of its authors distinctively Christian: Moskos, Dekios (?), Marinos (?), Bosanos (?), and Palladios.[196] Definitively Christian inscriptions turn up on tombs, but are undated. They probably belong to the fifth century. The proprietors mentioned on them seem to have been recent converts to judge from their names, such as Basos, Audos, and Baulos on one of them, which has no sign of cult except a cross inscribed in a circle.[197] The porch of the pagan tomb of Bassos, seemingly reused by a certain Athrēlos (᾽Αθρ‹η›λ(ος)?), has "Christ" and possibly IXΘYC cut on it.[198] These signs of earliest Christianization are quite peculiar, suggesting that this border district was a true cultural backwater. This holds true with the distinctively Christian tomb of Astērona, whose inscription is written in miserably spelled Greek. The monument is called a temple (τὼ εἱρέων), a memorial (τὸ μ[νη]μεῖον), and a hero's tomb (τὸ ἑροεῖον), terms that usually went out of use with the coming of Christianity. The monument has the "One God" formula and various symbols such as the Christogram, Alpha-Omega, and palm leaf.[199] It seems safe to date all this to the last quarter of the fourth century to judge from a certain similarity of its formula "in behalf of salvation" (ὑπὲρ σ[ωτη]ρίας) to another example found at Ruweha,[200] but the tomb of Astērona may in fact be later. Urim el-Djuz has no church. It is quite possible that the temple precincts became a Jewish and Christian *nekropolis* after the decline of the pagan cult in the post-Julianic period, but the old religion persisted in the parts round about for a long time.

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[190] IGLS 663.
[191] IGLS 634 at Ma'sarteh in Djebel il-A'la.
[192] IGLS 665.
[193] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 3, Map 7.
[194] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 2, Pl. VII.

Rīḥa, a village at the northernmost edge of Djebel Rīḥa, has a similar character to Urim el-Drūz. The earliest reference to Christianity is a funerary inscription of 386:[201]

> One God only. In memory of Bassos. Bassos began (this tomb). Theosebis his wife completed it. With their help Secundinus the housebuilder finished (the work).

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[195] IGLS 670.
[196] IGLS 668.
[197] IGLS 672.
[198] IGLS 666, 667.
[199] IGLS 671.
[200] Prentice, AAES III 263.
[201] IGLS 689. Prentice, AAES III, 278.

The same tomb had an apparently pagan burial in it at the same date:[202]

> The sons of Pamanos, Theoteknos and Artebanos brothers, completed the tomb. Secundinus the housebuilder finished (the work).

In the first instance, Secundinus the artisan used the "One God" formula and the neutral term "memory" (μνήμη) to characterize the burial, but in the latter case he omitted all signs of cult and used the rather more Hellenic "hero's tomb" (ἡροεῖον), a term that had a very limited currency in Christian burials. In 386, it seems, the village was in religious transition. Old-fashioned Latin and Syrian names prevailed among pagans and Christians alike. Village solidarity lasted despite religious differences. At a later time, an additional "One God" inscription was incised on the communal tomb.[203] It was perhaps the descendants of Pamanos who did this after their own conversion. Another pagan tomb was completed in 421/2. It belonged to Malchos son of Menander.[204] It is practically synchronous with a Christian tomb of 422:[205]

> (Cross)(Date)(Cross) The place of Alexander, *cancellarius* of the prefects, son of Aidesios, (built) through Gorgonius the jobber.

The religious character of Rīḥa was thus in flux for an entire generation (36 years) after the first "One God" inscription was cut, (that is between 386–422). It must be borne in mind, however, that Alexander had pursued a career in the *officium* of the Magister Officiorum as a glorified door keeper or attendant (*cancellarius*).[206] He either bought lands at Rīḥa or else returned to an ancestral holding after his retirement from the civil service. He may have accepted Christianity only after his appointment, as his father Aidesios has a Hellenic name. His profession of Christianity is not, therefore, a perfect gauge of local religious conditions through 422, except to say that the profession of monotheism did not seem essential to communal life at Rīḥa. This is a sign of cordial relations between the pagans and Christians of the village.

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[202] IGLS 690. Prentice, AAES III, 279. The men named cannot possibly be "monks", as W.K. Prentice supposes. Artebanos and Paman appear to be Persian names. They were seemingly migrants to this place, but pagans still turn up at later dates.

[203] IGLS 691. Prentice, AAES III, 280.

[204] IGLS 688. Prentice, AAES III, 283. The numerals at the start of this inscription have been taken as dates. W.K. Prentice expresses some doubt about this, but the editors of IGLS do not.

[205] IGLS 687. Prentice, AAES III, 282.

[206] Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 582.

The ancient village of Kaper Lata (present-day Ktellāta) lies some three kilometers to the south of Rīḥa. It has only one relevant Christian inscription. It was cut on a four-column vault erected by a certain Antoninus son of Philip in 449.[207] The onomastics and date suggest the Christianization of the site in the second quarter of the fifth century.

To the southeast lies the large village of Ruwēḥa. It stands on a bluff above the old Roman military road between Beroia and Chalkis sub Belo. Christianity arrived here no later than 384/5. The place has a fourth century church.[208] It is attested by an inscription on a reused block from a pagan funerary temple:[209]

> One God only who helps! In behalf of the salvation and remembrance of the living. Bassimas and Mathbabea rebuilt it.

These folk with barbaric-sounding Syrian names were local landowners. The "living" prayed for here are in fact the Christian dead (ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας καὶ μνήμ(ης) τῶν ζόντων). A great Christian magnate constructed a villa not long afterwards in 396.[210] The Christian named Bizzos son of Pardos, who is associated with the construction of the North Church, seems to have lived in the sixth century.[211] Ruwēḥa was quite plausibly a suburban residence for reasonably wealthy farmers whose precise urban connections are difficult to demonstrate more precisely. Their names and the date of the "One God" inscription suggest a local aristocracy that accepted Christianity in the late fourth century. Ruwêḥā thus differs considerably from the villages further to the east and north, which seemingly had fewer contacts with the agents of the patriarchate of Antioch.

The trend was thus for the wealthier villages to become Christian earlier. This is borne out by the excavations conducted at Rayān and reported by G. Tchalenko. The village lay well to the east of Ruwēḥa. The church at Rayān received its mosaic floor in 417. The funds came from the patriarchal treasury during the episcopate of Alexander of Antioch (414–424). The *periodeutēs* Mokimos supervised the work with the help of the local clergy, which consisted of a presbyter, deacon, and *psaltēs* all of whom have Semitic names (Mari, Zaccheos, and Jacob).[212] Flavius Libanius, an imperial official or local magnate, met part of the expense,[213] as did a certain Eusebius, son of the "blessed" or deceased Raphphouseos (Εὐσεβίου τοῦ ῾Ραφφουσεου τοῦ μακαρίτου).[214] It is likely that this Raphphouseos came from a pagan family and accepted Christianity in the very late fourth century. It is thus the second Christian generation of Rayān that is recorded in the epigraphy. By its time the new religion was well established in the village with the new church and celebration of the liturgy by Mari the presbyter.[215] We are unable to tell whether the local freeholders or tenant farmers took the lead of the wealthier families in this connection. Rayān probably first saw Christianity not long after Ruwēḥa, that is, no earlier than 384/5.[216]

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[207] IGLS 684. Prentice, AAES III, 273.
[208] Butler, *Early Churches*, 27ff. This is the South Church.
[209] Prentice, AAES III, 263.
[210] IGLS 675, 677, 681.
[211] IGLS 673, 674. Prentice, AAES III, 265, 266.
[212] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 3, no. 39b.

The Christianization of the Antiochene portion of Djebel Rīḥa suggests a great diversity of local conditions. The wealthier landowners adopted the new religion in the late fourth century, but the underclasses of their villages, as it seems, and the poorer places in general took longer to do so. Aramaic and Latinate names persisted longer here than in the northern parts of the Limestone Massif. The new religion made headway from the early fifth century onward thanks to the efforts of the the bilingual *periodeutai*.

Let us now consider the parts of Djebel Rīḥa lying under the jurisdiction of Apamea in the south to see if substantial differences existed in the rapidity and character of Christianization.

VI. The Apamene: Southern Djebel Rīḥa

Apamea, the metropolis of Second Syria, lies to the south-southwest of Djebel Rīḥa. A series of valleys leading down in that direction open the central part of the massif to traffic coming up from the provincial capital. It was a consequence of geography that Christianity should have entered Djebel Rīḥa from Apamea and that Christianization should have begun in the south.

The most aggressive proponent of the new religion in the Apamene was archbishop Marcellus, whose episcopate lasted through the mid- and late 380's. The church historian Sozomen indicates that Marcellus ordered the destruction of all the pagan temples in the countryside of the Apamene, and died in the act of carrying out an assault on a temenos at Aulon.[217] One might expect signs of temple demolitions and dated inscriptions as proof of this historical "fact", but the traces of pagan shrines in southern Djebel Rīḥa are quite rare. A mere two are attested, one at Kefr Rūma, the other at Khirbet Ḥāss. The foundations of the former are *in situ*, but the latter has been identified only by building fragments.[218] Neither is identified by an inscription or stratified ruins suggesting a destruction date in the 380's. Pierre Canivet has posited the existence of a temple at an ancient site where the ruins of a monastery lie whose architecture imitates the style of the "Theodosian renaissance" c. 400, but no archaeological remains have survived. The site lies on the plain southwest of Djebel Rīḥa and has been plausibly identified as the ancient Nikertai.[219] There is thus nothing in the area directly to connect these temples to the forays of Marcellus of Apamea.

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[213] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 3, no. 39d.

[214] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 3, no. 39c.

[215] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 3, no. 39b.

[216] The mosaic inscriptions cited here provide good examples of the early square uncials that turn up fairly often in the Syrian inscriptions c. 380–420.

[217] Supra, Ch. II, n. 121.

There is no reason, either, to believe that Marcellus of Apamea was chiefly responsible for the introduction of Christianity into Djebel Rīḥa, although the first signs of the new religion in some villages are synchronous with his episcopate. The process of Christianization in the Apamene was too protracted to have been the work of one aggressive archbishop, and in any case began before his known *floruit* in the 380's. The villages of Djebel Rīḥa have yielded a less detailed epigraphic record than those of the Antiochene, but nevertheless reveal much that is new and interesting. The hand of Marcellus is directly visible only in the construction of the church at Khirbet Muqa, which lies east-northeast of Apamea and is well to the south of Djebel Rīḥa. The mosaic floor was laid in 384/5. The inscription is devoid of any ideological statement about Christianization:[220]

> By the will of God the deacon Kyriades restored the church in behalf of bishop John of blessed and noble memory. And the same Kyriades made the mosaic in behalf of the most holy bishop Marcellus and Mareas the presbyter in the year 706 (of the Seleucid era).

The previous archbishop John had already established this rural church, and Marcellus simply provided the funds to adorn it. The latter's episcopate did not evidently begin long before 384/5 as well, an important date to consider in looking at the inscriptions of Djebel Rīha proper. The systematic building of churches really preceded Marcellus' time. The *periodeutai* of the see seem to have carried this out along with an Aramaic-speaking clergy, as happened at Qasr el-Abyad. Here the mosaic of the apse was laid under the direction of Eulogius the *periodeutēs*, Basos and Daniel the presbyters, and Rapsōnios the deacon. A layman named Kaiūm son of Malchos, a man of Arabo-Syrian parentage, contributed to the work as well.[221] The inscription is unfortunately undated.

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[218] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques*, Pl. VII.

[219] Maria-Theresa and Pierre Canivet, "Sites chrétiennes d'Apamène," *Syria* 48 (1971), 296–314.

[220] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 3, no. 39a.

The introduction of Christianity into the villages having temples cannot be dated with precision. At Kefr Rūma there was a pagan burial in 349, a date well before widespread Christianization began.[222] The site has no Christian inscriptions of any kind, and so it is impossible to suggest the date for a temple conversion. At Khirbet Ḥāss, on the other hand, pagan and Christian tombs provide plausible *termini*. Thirty-three years elapsed between the burial of Basileus son of Boubogeos in 367 (certainly a pagan interment) and that of an unnamed Christian in 430, whose tomb has many crosses incised upon it.[223] The latter's intense advertisement of his cult suggests the Christianization of Khirbet Ḥāss towards the end of the first quarter of the fifth century. There is also an undated "Christ, help!" inscription and a Christian house lintel belonging to the sixth century.[224] H.C. Butler believes that a Christian church was built at Khirbet Ḥāss in the fourth century.[225] If such a dating is accepted, it must be put in the last two decades before 400. If Marcellus' troops reached Khirbet Ḥāss and destroyed its temple, they may have built the church without reference to the rustics' initial religious allegiance.

The other villages of southwestern Djebel Rīḥa began to accept Christianity well before this time. The new religion entered Kefr Ambil by the mid-fourth century.[226] The village has a crypto-Christian funerary inscription whose date is c. 340–348. It is an important example of this genre:[227]

> Joy! In the year 65[.] (of the Seleucid era). In (the month) of Pamenos. Seleukos son of Zobon, our father, completed this tomb (*koimētērion*) as a visible memorial of his children.

The inscription has no crosses or other symbols of Christian belief. The word "Joy!" (χάρα) belongs to the conventions of pagan funerary epigraphy, but the term *koimētērion* (κοιμητήριον), the term used for "tomb", is characteristically Christian, for it alludes to the resurrection of the dead by reducing the sepulchre to a "place of sleep".[228] Seleukos was probably one of the very few Christians in the village at this time. The others seem to belong to the late fourth and fifth centuries. A pagan tomb of third-century date reused around this time by a Christian physician named Abramos (Ἀβρᾶμος + ἰατρός).[229] There is also a Christian lintel.[230] At nearby Dahr el-Kebira there is a "One God" inscription (εἷς Θεὸς ὁ μόνος) of 377:[231]

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[221] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 3, no. 39f.

[222] IGLS 1539. Prentice, AAES III, 172. The tomb is called a *heroëon* (sic) and lacks a cross. It was completed by Auxentios, his son Seleukos, and their slaves.

[223] IGLS 1495, 1501. Prentice, AAES III, 179, 181.

[224] IGLS 1497, 1505. Prentice, AAES III, 180, 185.

[225] Butler, *Early Churches*, 37.

[226] Butler, *Early Churches*, 37.

[227] IGLS 1529. Prentice, AAES III, 147.

> One God the only one. (Date) The stoa was completed by the artisans Hermogenes and Marathaios and Marinios.

It probably belongs to the episcopate of John, Marcellus' predecessor at Apamea.

The village of Ḥâss saw the new religion even earlier. An oil factory bears the formula: "One God only. The oil press was completed in November of the year 683 (of the Seleucid era)" (372 A.D.) (εἷς Θεὸς μόνος . . . συνετελέσθη τὸ ἐλεοτρ[ι]βῖον).[232] It was customary to inscribe the names of the local gods on oil presses, as was seen in the case of a similar installation at Kefr Nabo in Djebel Sim'ān.[233] The press at Ḥāss reveals that some of the oil producers had broken with the old gods by 371/2 A.D. It is possible that these early Christians constructed their own facility to avoid having to invoke the *daimones* of the old religion during the harvest. Ḥass was at this time in a state of religious flux, for at least one pagan burial is recorded after this. A tomb of 378 was completed by the family of Agrippa son of Marinos and Domna the man's wife. The inscription is not discernibly Christian.[234] A "One God only, Chi-Mu-Gamma" was added to this tomb at a later date, when the descendants of Agrippa became Christian.[235] This probably happened before the end of the fourth century. There is one other inscription of Ḥāss that may be crypto-Christian. It stands on the lintel of a tomb:[236]

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[228] Supra, Ch. IV, Sect. 1.
[229] IGLS 1528. Prentice, AAES III, 145.
[230] IGLS 1529, Prentice, AAES III, 147.
[231] IGLS *bis*. 1532.
[232] IGLS 1509, Prentice, AAES III, 152.
[233] Supra, Ch. X, Sect. 1.
[234] IGLS 1506. Prentice, AAES III, 154.
[235] IGLS 1507. Prentice, AAES III, 155.
[236] IGLS 1523. Prentice, AAES III, 153.

> (Date) Baradōnes son of Bachchilos and Marinos and his sister together completed the memorial, and also the son of Agripinos and the son of Zeōras. And they shall live with those who are long-lived (or "the ancients").

The tomb bears no crosses. It is called a "memorial place" (μνημῖον), a religiously neutral term. On the other hand, the reference to the builders' living in aftertime with "the long-lived ones" (ζήσουσιν πολυχρονίοις) could be either pagan or Christian, the reference being either to the "blessed" gods and heroes (μάκαροι) or to the Jewish prophets and Christian martyrs. Dated to 376 A.D., the inscription signifies flux in religious ideas. The Christian notion of "eternal life" had perhaps gotten into the thinking of the pagan rustics before their formal rejection of polytheism. On the other hand, the formula may be crypto- or proto-Christian. On balance, it appears that Ḥāss was divided on matters of religious opinion during the 370's, and that the next generation became Christian. The Christians of the 370's set up their own oil press, but used inoffensive language in the inscriptions of the *nekropolis*, where family ownership of the tombs predated the advent of the new religion. Within a generation, there was no longer any need either for "One God" or crypto-Christian formulae, because the place had accepted the new religion.

In 388 the village clergy of Ḥass supervised the ornamentation of a church:[237]

> Under the supervision of Barbeousos the presbyter, and Thalasios and Marinos and Dios the deacons, in the year 700 (of the Seleucid era) in the second indiction, the Council of Ten, Theodore, Marao (. . .), Diogenes, Marinos, Mokimos, Signōnēs, (and) Marcellinus (. . .), and Marcellus the tile-layer, completed the laying of this mosaic in Christ. Christ help!

The village had a church and regular clergy by 388. Archbishop Marcellus of Apamea had quite evidently sent these men out in the last years of his episcopate. This is one example of the less sensational side of his efforts to Christianize the city's *territorium*. The Latinate and Aramaic names Marinos and Segnas-Signōnēs appear in the pre-Christian inscriptions mentioned previously. The greater number of village headmen making up the Council of Ten (δεκάπρωτοι) were Christian in 388, with only seven being named here. The rest presumably remained pagan. The "One God" formula had become otiose by this time, and so all things were done

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[237] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 3, no. 39.

"in Christ" (ἐν Χριστῷ). The seven Christians in the Council of Ten may well be the mean index of the percentage of Christians in Ḥass in 388.

The Christianization of Ḥāss, except for some die-hard polytheists, came about in half a generation, between 372–388. This "Christianization" did not require the baptism of everyone in the village, but rather the domination of the village council by a majority of catechumens. If the village were prosperous, local monies and labor helped to finance the construction of the church and the salaries of the clergy. Within a generation, the older personal nomenclature of Latinate and Aramaic names will have died out.[238] Ḥāss is in a way a "textbook" example of the pragmatic style of Christianization that went on behind the scenes of Marcellus of Apamea's destruction of the temples, and comes closer to the realities of this business than do the stories about him recorded in the ecclesiastical histories of Sozomen and Theodoret.[239] It is one of the few archaeological attestations of Marcellus' work, along with the church mosaic inscription at Khirbet Muqa.[240] The archaeological evidence once again provides an important corrective to the contemporary historical narratives.

We must next turn to the villages of central Djebel Rīḥa just inside the frontiers of the Apamene. It is difficult to say here whether the Christian influence came predominantly from Apamea or from Antioch in the north. In either case, this district was marked by great religious diversity well into the fifth century. We learn of the presence of the *periodeutēs* Olympios from a sarkophagos inscription of ancient Megara (present-day Medjara).[241] At Snan in the borderland between the Apamene and Antiochene a tomb reveals a quasi-Constantinian formula of militant Christianization: "This sign conquers" (τὸ σημῖων τοῦτο νικᾷ), a reference to the cross.[242] The military *nekropolis* at Qalat il-Mudiq shows signs of Christianization, but probably only in the later fifth or sixth century.[243]

The village of Frīkya, although lying in the extreme north of the Apamene, was linked topographically to the central massif of Djebel Rīḥa and to the plain of Apamea. Some extremely important pre-Christian inscriptions illustrate the religious mentality that preceded the conversion of the rustics in the mid-fourth century. They stand on the mausoleum of 'Abd Rabba, a great building constructed of large blocks on a hillside to the south of the village. His name, given in the epigraphy as Abedrapsas (̓Αβεδράψας), is the pagan theophoric of an unknown god, "slave of the lord" (*'abed dʿ-rabā* in Aramaic). It was not the God of Judaism and Christianity:[244]

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[238] Cf. the tomb of Eusebius and Antonius. IGLS 1510–1522. Prentice, AAES III, 157–170.

[239] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 3.

[240] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 3, no. 39a.

[241] IGLS 1405. Prentice, AAES III, 276.

[242] IGLS 1404.

[243] Prentice, AAES III 141, 143.

> Abedrapsas son of Dionysios and Amathbabea his wife, daughter of Eupolemos, completed the tomb. Having partaken cheerfully of life, they offered prayers to the ancestral gods. Be of good courage, my soul. No one is immortal.

The invocation was of the local Baal, sun god, and female fertility deity. The inscription was cut in May 324. Another inscription tells of Abedrapsas' personal gratitude to an unknown god who benefitted him throughout his entire life:[245]

> Abedrapsas speaks, giving thanks for these things. When I came of age, my ancestral god, the god of Arkesilaos, appeared to me clearly and conferred many benefits on me. When twenty-five years old, I was given over to the study of an artisan trade, and I fully acquired the same trade in a short time, and furthermore, through my own provision, I purchased a village for myself with no one knowing it, and so I freed myself from having to go down to the city. And I was just and was justly guided.

Biographical statements are seldom given in such detail in pagan funerary epigraphy. The unknown god bestowed many favors on Abedrapsas (ἐν πολλοῖς με εὐεργέτησεν) after granting him an epiphany (δήλως μοι φ[ε]νόμενος). A fairly wealthy artisan might thus have the same expectations as a philosopher like Proclus.[246] Abedrapsas' trade was perhaps that of stonecutter, although positive proof is lacking. W.K. Prentice conjectures that it was Abedrapsas who created the relief protraits of himself, his wife Amathbabea, a daughter of the same name, and their slave Irene.[247] Abedrapsas' sense of satisfaction in leading a life of justice under the guidance of the deity (κὲ ἐ(γ)ὼ δικέος ἤμην, κὲ δικέως ὁδηγήθην) has a seemingly Judaic or Christian ring, but the other mausoleum inscription is entirely polytheistic.[248] The god of

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[244] IGLS 1409. Prentice, AAES III, 241.

[245] IGLS 1410. Prentice, AAES III, 242.

[246] On the correct identification of the phantasms of the gods, see: Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis* 2.10 (De Places 93–96).

[247] IGLS 1411. Prentice, AAES III, 243, with photo on p. 208f.

[248] IGLS 1409. Prentice, AAES III, 241.

Arkesilaos belonged to a Semitic pantheon. The inscription tells the story of a manumission. Abedrapsas began learning his trade quite late in life, thanks to his owner Arkesilaos' investment, and earned the price of his freedom. On the day of Abedrapsas' manumission, his owner will have sold him to the god, hence the freedman's doulo-theophoric name (*'Abed* plus the name or title of the divinity). In time he would own a domestic slave of his own. The mausoleum is that of a fairly wealthy man, one who had bought a village (χωρίον) and lived off its rents. Abedrapsas' acquired freedom from having to go down to the city (μὴ καταβένειν αὐτὸν εἰ(ς) τὴν πόλιν) reflects not economic necessity, but rather deliverance from the obligations of service and gratitude that freedmen owed to their former owners. It was Arkesilaos'—his owner's—god-given wealth that permitted this. The city was evidently Antioch or Apamea, which lay down-river and down-land, respectively, from Frīkya.

The religious culture of Frīkya was evolving toward Christianity in the 320's thanks to the protomonotheism of its principal citizen, Abedrapsas, whose sense of justice will have motivated him to collect fair rents from the tenants of the place. It would not be surprising if a temple dedicated to the god Rabā had been built in the first quarter of the fourth century, but the archaeological record is silent. If so, the divinity was forgotten within two generations. The first "One God" inscription was cut on a house in August 364.[249] It was perhaps around this time that the relief sculptures in Abedrapsas' mausoleum suffered mutilation.[250] A second "One God" inscription naming the Christian Trinity is undated.[251] Another inscription yet alludes to the hardships of the agriculturalists of Frīkya: "Jesus the Christ, God above all things, a physician and a release from evils" (. . . ἰατρὸς καὶ λύσις κακῶν Ἰασοῦς ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων Θε(ός)).[252] A sharp religious transition is evident from the fact that the Christian God is nowhere called "lord" or "master" (κύριος), the Greek translation of the name of Rabā, Abedrapsas' god. There seems also to have been a discontinuity in rural social and economic relations, with less of the traditional justice displayed by Abedrapsas' successors toward the tenant farmers of Frīkya.

It is difficult to say how typical the Christianization of Frīkya was as compared with the other villages of the northern fringe of the Apamene, as the epigraphy of these places is deficient in quality and quantity. At Babuda in the northwest, the first Christian inscription belongs perhaps to 474, but does not have a typology suggesting recent Christianization (Alpha-Chi-Rho-Omega. Chi-Mu-Gamma. IXΘYC).[253] The picture at ‘Allarūz in the west, overlooking the Orontes valley, is similar (572 A.D.).[254] At Dāna in the extreme northeast, however, it is somewhat different. A broken inscription names a certain Eusebius who carried out some building activity at the expense of the village in 428. The stone has a cross on it and is the only dated Christian inscription at Dana.[255] The phrase about the expenditure has an old-fashioned ring to it, being the sort of expression one would anticipate from a fourth-century pagan builder ((ἀ)πὸ τοῦ ἀναλώματος τῆς κώμης). The name Eusebius is, on the other hand, quite "modern" when compared with the onomastics of the earlier pagans of Dana, who have the usual run of Latinate, Semitic, and Hellenic names (Rufinus, Gouros, Olympianē).[256] Local culture was still in transition at Dāna c. 428. The village probably began to convert to Christianity sometime in the first quarter of the fifth century.

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[249] IGLS 1415. Prentice, AAES III, 248.
[250] Prentice, AAES III, 243, with photo on p. 209.
[251] IGLS 1417. Prentice, AAES III, 250.
[252] IGLS 1418.
[253] Prentice, AAES III, 215.

The final area of Djebel Rīḥa to be considered is the central part of the massif, which is open to penetration from the south via the plain leading north-northeast from Apamea. It becomes clear at once that the protomonotheism and early Christianization at Frīkya was something exceptional. Deir Sambil, a village lying not far to the south, has a group of unexceptional Christian funerary inscriptions dating from 399, 408/9, and 420.[257] The undated texts, however, reflect ongoing Christianization perhaps in the last two decades of the fourth century: a tomb with "This conquers" (τοῦτο νικᾷ), the cross being peculiarly missing.[258] The inscription on a tomb dated to 420 reads:[259]

> The heavens belong to the Lord (Cross), (as do) the earth and its fullness. He who performed the burial wrote this (Cross). The earth and its fullness are of the Lord, and so are all who dwell upon it. (Cross) (Chi-Mu-Gamma)

The author perhaps uses Psalm 23.1 here to contrast the Christian view of the cosmos with the polytheistic one dominated by some

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[254] Prentice, AAES III, 214.
[255] IGLS 1426. Prentice, AAES III, 256.
[256] IGLS 1425. Prentice, AAES III, 257.
[257] IGLS 1431, 1432, 1436. Prentice, AAES III, 225, 226, 228a.
[258] IGLS 1437. Prentice, AAES III, 237.
[259] IGLS 1434, 1435. Prentice, AAES III, 228, 229.

"lord" (κύριος or *rabā*) of the old religion,[259] on the analogy of the divinity seemingly worshipped at Frīkya. Elsewhere the point is made more explicitly: "(Chi-Mu-Gamma) The victory of Christ! Flee, Satan!" (Χ̅Υ̅ τὸ νῖκος. φεῦγε, Σατανᾶ),[260] a possible reference to the local god, now recategorized as a *daimon* in the language of the Septuagint. To clinch the point, there is an undated inscription containing elements of the old and new religious cultures in juxtaposition: "(Cross) In this sign every (?) holy man conquers ([πᾶς (?)] ὅσιος νικᾷ). May whatever you wish me, friend, be double for you."[261] It seems that the Christianization of Deir Sambil went on during 380–420. The ideology of the struggle was formulated in language quite out of the ordinary as compared with that used in the Antiochene, where the terminology is more standardized. This philological fact conceals the administrative reality that the Christianization of the Apamene was less tightly regulated than that of the Antiochene, notwithstanding archbishop Marcellus' attempts to obliterate the rural temples by force.

The well-attested ancient village of Kapropēra (present-day il-Bāra) was being Christianized around 412–417. The local god was perhaps again a variant of the Rabā seemingly worshipped at Frīkya and Deir Sambil, for a Christian inscription invokes the Lord of Powers (κύριος τῶν δυνάμεων).[262] The pagan burial of Malchos son of Gouras is dated 417, and the graffito on a house with a cross falls in 412.[263] There was a Christian burial in 416, with Alpha-Cross-Omega cut on the inscription.[264] The village was quite clearly divided on questions of religion at this time, but the characteristic "One God" inscriptions do not turn up. There are, however, some rather subtle allusions to the replacement of polytheism by Christian monotheism in the other inscriptions, as for example this text on a house lintel: "(Cross) Great is the power of the holy Trinity! (Cross) Priskos the (imperial) count conquers in this sign (Cross)!"[265] The first formula derives from the acclamation of Artemis in *Acts* 19.28: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" (μεγάλη ἡ Ἄρτεμις Ἐφεσίων) This Priskos may well have accepted Christianity during his adult years. Around that time he got a position at the imperial court, and thereafter retired to Kapropēra. A second monotheistic inscription is more emphatic about a series of unities, and perhaps derives from a baptistry: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism . . ." (+ Εἷς Κ(ύριο)ς, (μ)ία πίστις, ἓν βάπτισμα).[266] While monotheistic in format, this text may allude to controversies aside from Christianization. A door lintel has a third inscription vaguely related to monotheism:[267]

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[260] IGLS 1443. Prentice, AAES III, 234.
[261] IGLS 1444. Prentice, AAES III, 235.
[262] IGLS 1453.
[263] IGLS 1465, 1480. Prentice, AAES III, 188, 189.
[264] Prentice, AAES III, 190.
[265] IGLS 1457. Prentice, AAES III, 203.

> (Cross) Christ always conquers. (Cross) Faith, hope, charity (Cross), He lifts the beggar from the earth and raises the day-laborer from the dung-hill.

Expressing his ideas once again in phrases drawn from the Septuagint, the author celebrates the Christian victory in the countryside, where the solidarity of the Christian monk and agriculturalists brought the latter over to monotheism and to some extent transformed rural social and economic relations.[268] The inscriptions post-date the dated ones by perhaps a quarter of a century, and therefore belong c. 425–450, at a time when Christianity was well-established but certain remnants of the old polytheism and its symbols still lay about. The existence of a villa at Kapropēra indicates that by the mid-fifth century some residents were city-dwellers who came to spend their vacations or retirement here (like Priskos the imperial count). The village was becoming Christian before this, but had not yet been entirely converted.[269] This may explain why the church was outside the village rather than in it, an investment in the building coming only with the infusion of urban wealth after about 425.[270]

Midjleyya lies immediately to the south of Kapropēra (present-day il-Bārah), and had a church in it by the late fourth century.[271] There is nevertheless a rather late "One God" inscription on a sarkophagos of February 463 ("One God, who helps him who wrote this and him who reads it." (Cross)).[272] The Christian who found it necessary to advertise his monotheism was a convert or had family and friends who were polytheists. On the other hand, an undated Christian olive oil or wine factory bears the innocuous "Lord Christ, help Julian and Demetrius because they completed this!" along with the Alpha-Omega, Christogram, and cross.[273] There is, finally, an intriguing graffito written in Greek, but from right to left and with the letters reversed, as in Aramaic: "Let (the cross) conquer!" (+ Νίκαε) (ƎAꓘIИ).[274] The author was not used to writing Greek, as the retrograde script and spelling indicate. The victory formula had no real force unless expressed in Greek. The *periodeutai* who introduced the new religion and the presbyters who consolidated its gains enforced Greek cultural values to such an extent that no Aramaic equivalent ever gained currency in the epigraphy.[275] The monks and clergy negotiated many conversions in the local Semitic dialects, but the liturgical language of Christianization was Greek, even for those who could barely write and understand it.

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[266] IGLS 1458. Prentice, AAES III, 204.

[267] IGLS 1460. Prentice, AAES III, 201.

[268] Supra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 2.

[269] For example, Pantaleon the *commerciarius*, a revenue official, made a pious offering to the church here in 525/6. IGLS 1473.

[270] IGLS 1481.

[271] Butler, *Early Churches*, 27.

[272] Prentice, AAES III, 207.

[273] Prentice, AAES III, 209.

There are other indications of Christianity in Djebel Rīḥa in the late fourth century with the churches at Serdjilla, Dallōza, and Ba'ūdeh. Only the last one is dated, belonging to 392.[276] It was probably begun after the death of archbishop Marcellus in 388 on the strength of the fiscal infrastructure he had created to aid the Christianization of the Apamene. At Serdjilla, the construction of the large church there[277] accords well with one of the inscriptions: "Emmanuel. (Chi-Mu-Gamma) Christ conquers!",[278] a sign of recent Christianization. The arrival of the new religion at ancient Arra (present-day Mu'arret en-Nu'mān) at the east central edge of the massif belongs to the time after 325, for none of its earlier Christian inscriptions are dated.[279]

Djebel Rīḥa was not Christianized solely in the time of Marcellus of Apamea, as his sons probably argued after his death. The dates of the Christian inscriptions are too broadly dispersed through the fourth and fifth centuries to bear such a construction. He did, however, invest considerable sums in churches and clerical salaries during the 380's, and this put the Christianization of the northeastern hinterland of Apamea on a new footing almost at once. Thereafter, the new religion progressed at a pace comparable to that in the parts of Djebel Sim'ān and Djebel Barisha in the Antiochene (but not Djebel Ḥalaqah, where there were serious delays). It remains to be seen, however, how quickly this occurred in the more isolated parts of the Apamene.

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[274] Prentice, AAES III, 210.

[275] Prentice, AAES III, 210, with photo. As the edict of 14 November 435 puts it, temples were to be "cleansed by the erection of the reverend sign of the Christian religion (*conlocatione venerandae Christianae religione expiari*). *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.25. There is no equivalent expression in the rather ragged-looking Syriac inscriptions collected by E. Littmann in PAES IV, B.

[276] Butler, *Early Churches* 26f., 35f., 37.

[277] IGLS 1491. Prentice, AAES III, 218.

[278] IGLS 1492. Prentice, AAES III, 219.

[279] IGLS 1545, 1546, 1549. The pagan burial attested in IGLS 1547 may date from the reign of Julian the Apostate.

VII. The Apamene: Tarutia Emporōn and Its Environs

East of Djebel Rīḥa/Zāwiyeh lies a plain dotted with numerous villages. The stand at the southern edge of the basin in which Chalkis sub Belo sits some 100 kilometers to the north. To the south rise the foothills of the basaltic massif Djebel il-ʻAlā (not to be confused with Djebel il-Aʻla in the Limestone Massif).[280] Tarutia Emporōn (present-day Kerratīn) lies astride the road network between Djebel Rīḥa and the towns and fortresses of the so-called *limes* of Chalkis among which were Anasartha and Androna.[281] Tarutia Emporōn got its name from an Aramaic and Greek combination having the sense of "Second Town of the Merchants", this because of a great rural market where the olive-oil of Djebel Rīḥa was exchanged for the animal products of the nearer Syrian desert.[282] As with other merchant communities like Maiuma, the seaport of Gaza, Christianity made early inroads at Tarutia. On the other hand, the diffusion of the new religion into the smaller villages on its periphery took much longer, sometimes even a period of two or three generations.

Only the earliest stages of Christianization require notice at Tarutia Emporōn, round which smaller villages radiate in every direction except to the north.[283] The new religion first ascertainably appeared in the years immediately after the death of Julian the Apostate. The earliest Christian inscription was cut in 365 on a house lintel and predictably incorporates the conventions of both pagan and Christian epigraphy:[284]

> (Date)(Chi-Mu-Gamma) As many things as you say, it shall be double for you. Christ, help those dwelling (inside) and those who read (this).

Another lintel of 368/9 reflects a slightly later stage of Christianization, where the pagan formulae are entirely omitted in favor of an uncompromisingly monotheistic statement:[285]

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[280] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 3, Fig. 7.

[281] Tchalenko, *Villages antiques* 2, Pl. III.

[282] Two Tarutians ended up in Odessos on the Black Sea coast. Veselin Beshevliev, *Spätgriechische und spätlateinischen Inscriften aus Bulgarien* (Berlin 1964), nos. 97, 117.

[283] A large epigraphic sample: IGLS 1613–1647. PAES III B, 970–1002.

[284] IGLS 1614. PAES III B, 970.

[285] IGLS 1625. PAES III B, 971.

> One God. The building of Silvanos was erected through J(esus) Ch(rist) S(on of) G(od) S(avior). (Date).

This "One God" inscription speaks alone for the many persons who became Christian between about 365–400 who, as usual, strove to differentiate themselves from the polytheists of Tarutia and of the desert hinterlands who came to the village market.

With the passing of the first Christian generation the formularies began to change. The next Christian inscription in the sequence, a lintel with the Chi-Mu-Gamma ("Christ born of Mary"), falls in 408/9 and omits the "One God" expression,[286] as do all the succeeding ones (from 408/9, 420, 436/7, and so on).[287] The last of them makes the plea: "Lord Christ, help your servant Eugenios with his household (Cross)" (436/7 A.D.).[288] The choice of the terms "Lord" (κύριος) and "servant" or "slave" (δοῦλος) reflects some traces of the earlier Semitic divinities whose adherents at times had names like the Abedrapsas or 'Abed dᵉ Rabā of Frīkya in Djebel Rīḥa.[289] The first inscription at Tarutia to name a regular cleric comes quite late, the sarkophagos of Antoninos the deacon, in 486/7.[290] Random loss and survival certainly explain why earlier clerics fail to turn up in the epigraphy. The large church that W.K. Prentice calls the "cathedral" had its first lintel laid only in 504/5.[291] A second lintel was laid in 510/11 under the supervision of John the presbyter.[292] These dates are much too late to be taken as the occasion of the *periodeutai* finally transferring their authority to the presbyters, an event that certainly took place well before 400. It will be seen in due course that the main church serving Tarutia lay well outside the village. The inscriptions within it simply illustrate that a Christian village might have to wait over 100 years before it acquired its first large basilica.

Tarutia Emporōn remained an ethnically and religiously mixed village throughout the fourth century. There were Christian migrants like the Arab Theophilos whose tribal roots were commemorated on his tomb in 465/6 (Θεοφίλου τῶν Φωθλα).[293] A Christian Aramaean named John Barsēneas built a house in 477/8.[294] Some local merchants or settlers were not Christians. This is borne out in the case of two neighboring villages, Umm Wilāt and Serā'.[295] This perhaps explains two lintels without crosses at Tarutia, one of 411/12, the other of 443/4.[296] It is hardly to be expected that a fairly cosmopolitan village like Tarutia would be entirely homogeneous in religion even by the mid-fifth century, but Christians did certainly predominate by that time. Some families were recently converted, as for example a certain Eusebius whose sons Kalliopos and Agripinos erected a house in 455.[297] Their Hellenic and Latinate names suggest that the men were not born Christians. But other families, like that of the Paul who built a house in 444, had been Christian for at least a generation and a half.[298] There will have been few pagans inside Tarutia in the time of Justinian the Great thanks to the presence of the monks. The archimandrite Aninas was buried here at the age of 90 in 531/2.[299] He was doubtless made of the same stuff as the Syrian monks whose exploits of Christianization are recorded by John of Ephesus (6th c.).[300] It is not surprising that the monotheistic formula was revived when the large basilica was completed between 504–511 ("God is one", ἷς ὁ Θεός).[301]

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[286] IGLS 1624. PAES III B, 973.
[287] IGLS 1633, 1626, 1628. PAES III B, 974, 976, 977.
[288] IGLS 1628. PAES III B, 977.
[289] Supra, Ch. X, Sect. 6.
[290] IGLS 1643. PAES III B, 986.
[291] IGLS 1617. PAES III B, 987.
[292] IGLS 1619. PAES III B, 988.
[293] IGLS 1644. PAES III B, 982.
[294] IGLS 1642. PAES III B, 985.

The earliest important church in the vicinity was not at Tarutia, but at 'Idjāz some three kilometers to the south. This, the basilica of the Apostles, was constructed during the reign of the coemperors Theodosius the Great and Arcadius, before Honorius was associated with them as the third Augustus (383–393). A construction site outside Tarutia had to be chosen during the early decades of Christianization because few lands inside the village-town lay in Christian hands, or so it seems. The inscriptions make propaganda in behalf of the imperial house that was issuing comprehensive edicts against Hellenic religion and its temples:[302]

> Prayer of the apostles in behalf of the victory of our masters, emperor Flavius Theodosius and Arcadius Caesar.
>
> Renewal and life to our masters Theodosius and Arcadius and to their affairs.

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[295] Infra, this section.

[296] IGLS 1623, 1637. PAES III B, 975, 978.

[297] IGLS 1627. PAES III B, 980.

[298] IGLS 1638. PAES III B, 979.

[299] IGLS 1632. PAES III B, 994.

[300] Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 329–334.

[301] IGLS 1620. PAES III B, 989.

[302] IGLS 1587, 1588, 1592. PAES III B, 1006, 1007, 1011. The chancel screen across the bema was not added until 429/30, under the supervision of Salemos the presbyter. IGLS 1586. PAES III B, 1005.

> Prayer of the apostles in behalf of our wandering and scattered brothers, widows, and orphans.

Euphresios the presbyter apparently supervised this work.[303] In these prayers, which certainly belonged to the local liturgy, one can see an attempt to widen the consciousness of the residents of Tarutia in a sense favorable to the new religion. The argument is addressed not only to the authors of the imperial edicts, but also to the sector of the local population that had slipped into poverty: widows and orphans, but particularly the migrants of the Syrian diaspora scattered throughout the cities of the eastern and western Mediterranean coastlands.[304] This consciousness belonged to the ethos of Christianization. If the less successful migrant folk of Tarutia had in the past seen the local Semitic gods of the sky and soil break their covenants, they now belonged to a trans-Mediterranean community spiritually linked by prayers now recited in the church of the Apostles, a sublime conception which demonstrated to everyone the philanthropic and organizational superiority of the new religion over the old.[305]

The "One God" inscriptions at Tarutia in the 360's and the erection of the church of the Apostles at 'Idjāz between 383–393 mark the beginnings of Christianization in the tightly constricted group of villages round about. A church was built at Abū Ḥanīyeh in 406/7 and staffed with a presbyter and a deacon.[306] The inscription names a bishop as the originator of this work, but the surviving letters of the town of his see are too few for firm identification (χρόνοις τοῦ κυ(ρίου) Μο[--]εο[-] τοῦ ἐπισκό[που ---]κεων). He may have resided at 'Idjāz. If so, this will have hastened the Christianization of the district. Conversions in the villages went on all through the first half of the fifth century. At Mir'āyeh, there is a "One God" inscription on the lintel of the house of a certain Eulalios of 402/3.[307] At 'Ōdjeh in the southeast, serious Christianization came more slowly. Here the latest pre-Christian inscription belongs to 375/6.[308] There is also a Christian lintel of 394/5, but a "One God help!" inscription turns up as late as 441/2, if W.K. Prentice's reading of the stones is correct.[309] Private donors built a martyrion around this time (c. 400–450), one of whom was the Semite Anapsones.[310] The presbyter Symeonos is attested on two chancel posts (5th c.).[311]

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[303] PAES III B, 1010.

[304] D. Feissel, "Contributions à l'épigraphie grecque chrétienne de Rome," *Rivista di archeologia cristiana* 58 (1982), 353–382.

[305] See R. MacMullen's remarks in *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven 1981), 135–37.

[306] IGLS 1605. PAES III B, 1003.

[307] IGLS 1649. PAES III B, 968.

[308] IGLS 1663.

[309] IGLS 1653, 1654. PAES III B, 958, 959.

Further to the east, however, there is no sign of the new religion until the sixth century. To judge from the case of ʻŌdjeh, the catechists of the local see had their hands full in the immediate vicinity of Tarutia until c. 450. Umm Wilāt was perhaps never Christianized. A single inscription of 475/6 names Barathōn, Abrammios, Barlaqos, and Eugenios as the owners of a house or other building. It has no cross.[312] Serāʻ, lying well away to the southeast, has a sixth-century Trinitarian inscription.[313] The earlier tomb of Ebidborouchos, built in 419, was certainly for a pagan interment.[314] The Christian house lintel of Azzizos son of Hermes reflects the first or second Christian generation, but is undated.[315] The fortress of Adrona (present-day el-Anderīn), lying some twenty-five kilometres southeast of Tarutia, tells a similar story. The Christian site grew up around the sixth-century fortress. All its inscriptions are Christian, with nothing before 507. By constrast, the surrounding villages contain no significant Christian inscriptions. Those who converted perhaps settled in the environs of the fortress, which the emperor Anastasius I founded.[316] The Christianization of this stretch of country thus probably predates the program of Christianization pressed by Justinian the Great. It would seem that the consolidation of the empire's defenses in the wake of the Persian War of 502–507 aided the conversion of the limitrophic agriculturalists, who reestablished their abodes closer Adrona and thereby came under ecclesiastical pressure to accept the new religion.

The local episcopate concentrated its efforts during the fifth century toward the west instead, in the direction of Arra (present-day Muʻarret in-Nuʻmān). Thus, Hesychios the presbyter was active at Herakeh in 418/9 where he built a Christian stoa.[317] The village seems to have been thoroughly Christian thereafter, although former Hellenes were about. A Christian lintel of 523/4 invidiously parodies a pagan epigram of apotropaic force:[318]

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[310] PAES III B, 961, 962.
[311] IGLS 1658. PAES III B, 963, 964.
[312] IGLS 1651. PAES III B, 967.
[313] IGLS 1668. PAES III B, 949.
[314] IGLS 1667. PAES III B, 948.
[315] IGLS 1671. PAES III B, 952.
[316] IGLS 1676–1713.
[317] IGLS 1582. PAES III B, 1026.
[318] IGLS 1579. PAES III B, 1029.

> The master Jesus Christ, the son and Logos of God, dwells here. Nothing evil shall enter, and it was built. John son of Domnos built it.

The earlier Hellenic variant ran:[319]

> Herakles, splendidly victorious son of Zeus, dwells here. Nothing evil shall enter.

Christ thus became the new Herakles here and in another inscription of 496/7, which asks: "If God be on our side, who shall be against us?"[320] The John of the first inscription, along with his parents Domnos and Sosanna, had been Christians since at least 517/8, as the lintel of the family tomb reveals.[321] Perhaps they had neighbors who were not, but the point is moot through lack of evidence.

The parody of Hellenic fashion seen here also turns up at the large site of Ma'rāta, which has no pre-Christian phase. An unnamed builder saw fit to make a cross on a structure of unknown type in 392.[322] A pyramidal tomb which lacks a cross and has a high-sounding Hellenic inscription is nevertheless Christian by virtue of certain encoded key words. The grammar and spelling are not perfect:[323]

> An eternal dwelling place, but for those who live piously it is a gateway of sacred paradise. For without this (gateway) no one shall be a partaker of that (dwelling place). Bassos, John, and Alexander ornamented this (sacred paradise) for the sake of good memory.

John and the others were of course Christians. The composer of the epigram alludes to Christian paradise by his "gateway of sacred paradise" (ἱεροῦ προπύλεα παραδίσσου), which could equally be taken for the entrance to the sacred grove or park of a pagan temple like that of Apollo at Daphne. Another tomb at Ma'rāta lacks a cross, but is called the *koimētērion* or "place of sleep" of Malchos. The man who supervised its construction bore the name of the Christian martyr of Cilicia, Konon.[324] The trades practiced at Ma'rāta are unknown, but the Christians there quite obviously felt sophisticated enough to dispense with the usual symbols and to use allusive language instead. Like some Phrygian rustics, they had a finer sense of the Greek language than that possessed by the ordinary merchant folk of Tarutia, and so produced a *nekropolis* with a crypto-Christian flavor.

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[319] Ibid.
[320] IGLS 1576. PAES III B, 1027.
[321] IGLS 1578. PAES III B, 1028.
[322] IGLS 1560. PAES III B, 1036.
[323] IGLS 1558. PAES III B, 1043.
[324] IGLS 1565. PAES III B, 1041.

Elsewhere the signs of the new religion are more conventional. Among these are a "One God" inscription of 418 at 'Aibān and a "One God only" at il-Ghadfeh (5th c.).[325] The definitive Christianization of the countryside west of Tarutia was marked by the completion of the chapel of the Archangels at Fa'lul in 526/7 with funds provided by Diogenes, a member of the senatorial order.[326] It evidently lay on an estate of his.

Tarutia had militant Christians in it from the 360's onward. The era of Christianization for the parts round about was later, c. 390–450, with a fair amount of local variation. The presence of a local bishop at 'Idjāz, as it seems, accelerated the process to some extent, but even he was compelled to accept some limitations. The villages east and southeast of Tarutia were Christianized much later, in the early sixth century, but in some cases not at all, as for example Umm Wilāt. The conversion of the villages on the desert fringe came last of all in the set of local priorities, much as they did in the eastern parts of the Hauran plain in the Provincia Arabia.[327]

VIII. The Apamene: Central and Southern Djebel il-'Alā

Christianity entered the southeastern Apamene more slowly than elsewhere. Djebel il-'Alā is a basaltic massif having villages scattered everywhere. It received less initial attention from the archbishops of Apamea than Djebel Rīḥa. The southeastern part of Djebel il-'Alā lay in the *territorium* of Epiphaneia on the Orontes, whereas—for want of fuller information—the central massif seems to have been under the direct administration of Apamea. Dated inscriptions have not turned up in numbers sufficient for a detailed chronological analysis of Christianization here. A preliminary look at the evidence suggests the presence of the new religion in a small number of villages in the last decade of the fourth century. Thereafter it began to spread slowly, but did not gain real force until the sixth century.

The villages of central Djebel il-'Alā showing clear signs of religious transition lie generally around the northern and eastern rim of the massif. The pattern of Christianization has little geographical coherence. One gets the impression that villages of polytheists lay mixed with Christian ones straight through the first half of the sixth century. It is best to trace the process of Christianization by examining the larger villages first.

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[325] IGLS 1552, 1554. PAES III B, 1049, 1045.

[326] PAES III B, 1050.

[327] Infra, Ch. XI, Sect. 1.

There is hardly any evidence about the pre-Christian religious life of central Djebel il-‘Alā. It has all turned up at Qal‘at el-Hawāys, where the principal deity was Kronos-Saturn.[328] Three inscriptions tell us all we know about how the polytheists understood the workings of their god:[329]

> In the year 564 (of the Seleucid era), when men stood firm against Nemesis, this hero called upon Kronos, and victory was given to him. Neither barbarians nor anyone in the neighborhood was harmed because he, claiming the honor, entered (and) gave. . . .
>
> Read the things written and believe.
>
> The all-virtuous god loved right vision and sanctified (?) the same in front of him (the hero).

The dated inscription belongs to 252/3 A.D. It is unfortunately broken at the end. The actual events in question will remain a matter of conjecture,[330] as will the precise nature of the religious experience lying behind the "right vision" (ὀρθόβλεψις) that the divinity Kronos sanctified (σε[μν]είνει) for the unnamed hero. The "barbarians" were certainly the pastoralist Arabs who periodically exchanged animal products for the fruits of the land from the agriculturalists of Qal‘at el-Ḥawāys and its vicinity. The "hero" was either a wealthy landowner who defended the district during the military crisis of 253, when Sassanid Persian armies invaded Syria, took many captives, and sacked Antioch, or, more probably, Sulpicius Uranius Antoninus, the priest-king of Emesa who organized the defense of the upper Orontes valley.[331] The person reading the inscription is called upon to "trust in" (πίστευσον) the operation of the god's virtue or power after the deliverance from the terrors of 253. Nothing is known about the more prosaic operation of the "peace of the gods" in connection with the local agricultural regime. Qal’at el-Ḥawāys has no Christian remains. The locals perhaps accepted the new religion only in the sixth century, if indeed el-Ḥawāys is the Christian successor of the site. In the latter place is the dated Christian inscription of the Arab Kaiūm (558/9 A.D.).[332]

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[328] J. Lassus, *Inventaire archéologique de la région au nord-est de Ḥama* 1 (Damascus 1936), 132–36. This work hereinafter cited as Lassus, *Inventaire*.

[329] Lassus, *Inventaire*, nos. 75, 76, 77.

[330] Cf. Lassus' discussion, *Inventaire*, no. 75.

[331] A. Alföldy, "The Crisis of the Empire (A.D. 249–270)," *Cambridge Ancient History, edd. var.*, 12 (Cambridge 1939), 169f. Idem, "Die Haupteregnisse der Jahre 253–261 n. Chr. im Orient im Spiegel der Münzprägung," *Berytus* 4 (1937), 53ff.

[332] Lassus, *Inventaire*, no. 79 and p. 137f.

The earliest site in central Djebel il-'Alā with clear signs of an organized Christian community is el-Hazimeh, the southernmost of the villages under consideration here.[333] The village has a small Roman-style temple inside a rectangular precinct wall, but the deity worshipped there is unknown.[334] A church was built by 390/1 whose atrium was apparently dedicated to the Mother of God.[335] Two Christian men, Symeon and John, erected a house lintel around 400.[336]

The presence of a church at el-Hazimeh led very gradually to the Christianization of the neighboring villages. Its northeastern neighbor, Rabdeh, has two "One God" inscriptions that probably belong to the fifth century.[337] The final transference of prayers for the good harvest into the care of the Christian God is suggested by a mill with a cross and the date 510 A.D. inscribed on it.[338] The cult of St. Sergius became popular with the sedentary Arabs living in Rabdeh in the sixth century as well.[339] The large and important village of Ruweida lying north of Rabdeh shows no signs of Christianity at all until the sixth century,[340] although the place perhaps had less significance before then. The site has a church, defensive towers, and tombs, all of them undated. The first cleric attested is Thomas the deacon, who seems to have founded a chapel of the Virgin around 539/40.[341] The lintel of a larger church of the same name was laid in 554/5 A.D.[342] Ruweida was thus one of the many villages Christianized at the instigation of Justinian the Great. Even so, a pagan liturgy survives in Christianized form on a stone: "In behalf of the prayer and salvation. . . . (ὑπὲρ εὐχῆς κ(αὶ) σο[τηρίας]) God himself affixes (?) the doorposts and frame."[343] This survival is consistent with a rather late date for the village's acceptance of the new religion. The countryside round about was not Christianized before the last quarter of the fifth century either, to judge from two inscriptions at Qaṣr Shteb.[344] The first names a barrister with the pre-Christian name Arksilas; the second is a stone fragment with the Seleucid date 776 or 876 on it and no cross. The latter was most likely cut in 464/5 A.D.[345] It is doubtful that Qaṣr Shteb was ever Christianized.

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[333] Lassus, *Inventaire*, 160–64.

[334] Lassus, *Inventaire*, 165–68.

[335] IGLS 1825.

[336] IGLS 1826. Lassus, *Inventaire* no. 94. The inscription has the square uncials common in the Antiochene and Apamene between c. 380–420.

[337] IGLS 1834, 1835. Lassus, *Inventaire*, 176–79.

[338] IGLS 1832.

[339] IGLS 1831: "(Cross) St. Sergius, help those staying here! Amen." The combination of the invocation of St. Sergius and the use of square uncials, which came into fashion again after c. 500, puts this inscription in the sixth century.

[340] Lassus, *Inventaire*, 119–128.

[341] This is the presumed consensus of IGLS 1789 and 1791.

[342] IGLS 1790.

[343] IGLS 1794. Cf. supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 2, for many examples of this pre-Christian invocation of divine help.

There are three villages in the north of central Djebel il-'Alā that have more complete epigraphic samples. These are Sheikh Barak, Umm el-Halakhil, and Umm er-Redjim. One would have expected these sites and their neighbors to have been Christianized earlier than the sites to the southeast because of their close proximity to Tarutia Emporōn and 'Idjāz, where the new religion took root in the last quarter of the fourth century, and where a regular clergy had been installed by the first decade of the fifth century.[346] Let us consider the three sites more closely.

At Sheikh Barak[347] the new religion took root at an early date by local standards. There is a Christian lintel of 410.[348] More significantly, an inscription of 412/3 records the name of the bishop Kouros, at whose behest some Christian building was erected thanks to the vow of two local people, the Arab 'Abd el-Malik and his wide Andreaē.[349] The location of the bishop's see is unknown, although it may have been at 'Idjāz not far from Tarutia Emporōn.[350] There seem to have been pagans still living at Sheikh Barak until c. 450/1, as an inscription with no cross suggests,[351] but Christianity was firmly established by the first quarter of the sixth century to judge from the inscription of Protoudios the deacon in 525/6.[352] The village still had a large component of Arabs around that time ("Abraam son of 'Amrat completed it")(502 A.D.).[353]

Umm el-Halakhil underwent the same process sometime in the fifth century. This village had three small three-aisle churches and a fortress with a tower at each corner, all of which are unfortunately undated.[354] The last known pagan lintel inscription was cut in

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[344] Lassus, *Inventaire*, 115–18.

[345] IGLS 1787, 1788.

[346] As was seen in the case of Djebel Ḥalaqah, the argument of proximity does not always hold. Supra, Ch. X, Sect. 2.

[347] This site is somewhere in the vicinity of present-day Umm er-Redjim. Lassus, *Inventaire*, 41–46.

[348] IGLS 1734.

[349] IGLS 1739.

[350] Supra, Ch. X, Sect. 7.

[351] IGLS 1737.

[352] IGLS 1735.

[353] IGLS 1738. Cf. the more typical "*koimētērion* belonging to John and Pelagia." IGLS 1742.

[354] Lassus, *Inventaire*, 57–78.

356/7.[355] Thereafter conversions seem to have been going on as late as c. 450, to judge from a lintel inscription that invokes Christ as Victor:[356]

> (Cross) Be the help of your servant Romanos (?). (Cross) Long live Romilos. Christ conquers always. (Date)(Cross)(Alpha-Omega)

This inscription, belonging to 453/4, is perhaps not far off from another undated one suggesting recent conversion with the "One God only" formula.[357]

There is, finally, Umm er-Redjim.[358] Found there was a lintel without a cross or any other sign of Christianity and dated 416 A.D.[359] An undated Chi-Rho "One God" inscription carved in round uncials typical of fifth-century types seems to put the Christianization of the village in the mid- or late fifth century.[360] A retired civil servant (*primiscrinius*) named Mamas erected a house in 519 A.D. after purchasing an allotment there.[361] By this time the village was completely Christian and requires little further comment, except to note that, as with many other villages in central Djebel il-'Alā, Umm el-Redjim had mostly gone over to the new religion well before the time of Justinian the Great. There were apparently still pagans in the countryside, or at any rate villages that lacked a complete ecclesiastical structure in the form of personnel and buildings, for the *periodeutēs* Thomas is reported to have been active in 562/3 A.D., having supervised the construction of a tower in nearby Tell Khazneh.[362]

It is far from ideal to sum up complex questions with the aid of tables, but the epigraphic remains at the other sites of central Djebel il-'Alā are so sparse as to limit serious discussion. The chronological dimensions of the problem may be stated briefly, with the first Christian inscription of sites given here below:

Site:	*Date*:	*Remarks*:
1. El Maksar el-Ahdab (Lassus 128f.) (IGLS 1796)	398–407	"With the help of God."

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[355] IGLS 1760.
[356] IGLS 1752.
[357] IGLS 1756.
[358] Lassus, *Inventaire*, 34–41.
[359] IGLS 1731.
[360] IGLS 1730.
[361] IGLS 1729.
[362] IGLS 1726. Lassus, *Inventaire*, 28–32.

2. El-Qseyr (Lassus 87–90) (IGLS 1766)	mid-5th c.?	"One God only, who helps Basos and Daniel the deacon." (Round uncials)"
3. El-Ekhwēn (Lassus 109–113) (Lassus nos. 61, 62)	463, 471	---
4. Tell Ferdjeh (Lassus no. 29)	471/2	---
5. Qerrateh (Lassus 17–20) (IGLS 1721)	500	---
6. Kaproikenōn (present-day Kefr ez-Zita) (IGLS 1781)	499 or later	Omicron-upsilon ligature
7. Rasm el-'Abed (Lassus 84–87) (IGLS 1763)	510/1	---
8. Soran (Lassus 182–84) (Lassus no. 109)	510	---
9. Umm et-Tin (Lassus 25–27) (IGLS 1725)	516	Lintel of imperial count Antiochenos
10. Qasr Bayt Ali (Lassus 170–75) (Lassus no. 97)	524	3-aisle church in village
11. Hawa (Lassus 91–100) (IGLS 1768, 1772).	528	Tower "One God and his Christ." (mid-5th c.?)
12. Qasr Abu Samra (Lassus 151–59) (Lassus no. 87)	530	House Church Relief sculpture of stylite (Lassus 153)
13. Qasr el-Mharram (Lassus 143–51) (Lassus nos. 81–84)	551	3 towers
14. Ma'an (Lassus 140)	554/5	---
15. Abu Mekkeh (Lassus 4–8) (IGLS 1717)	567	---
16. 'Atshān (Lassus 103–107) (IGLS 1785)	567	

The overriding significance of the tabulation of these inscriptions lies in the fact that the Christianization of most sites was well underway before the time of Justinian the Great's reissue of the emperor Zeno's law against Hellenic religion. Only four of the sixteen villages in question had their earliest Christian inscriptions cut after 550, and in the latter instance it is difficult to discover anything at all about a pre-Christian population. It is possible, although not empirically proveable, that these places were newly founded during the economic expansion of the 520's and 530's, and that they were originally populated with Christian settlers. The real work of Christianization thus seems to have been done between about 450–500. It is difficult to find the exact chronological context of the undated "One God" inscriptions (sites no. 2 and 11 above), but they seem to belong best around 450.[363]

It is quite obvious from the table and from the previous discussion in this section that the archbishops of Apamea concentrated their efforts at Christianizing the countryside first on Djebel Rīḥa between about 370–400, and only got around to central Djebel il-'Alā thereafter. Local churches existed in a few localities by c. 400, but the new religion made its greatest inroads only later, and took place in a political and cultural vacuum unaffected by the imperial edicts of 8 November 392 and those that followed.

An analogously corroborative pattern emerges from the epigraphy of southeastern Djebel il-'Alā, which lay in the *territorium* of Epiphaneia on the Orontes. The bishops there seem to have made no serious attempt to Christianize the rustics before the third quarter of the fifth century. Once begun, the process was protracted down to the mid-sixth century, all of this in perfect correspondence with John of Ephesus' statements about the survival of rural pagans in all the provinces of the empire in the early decades of Justinian's reign.

For the sake of brevity and clarity, it is best to represent the epigraphy of southeastern Djebel il-'Alā schematically:

Site:	*Date*:	*Description*:
1. Tell Snān (=Isnān)	439/40	Lintel.Cross.Omega-Alpha.Cross (IGLS 1978)
	471	Hypogeum lintel. No cross. (IGLS 1977=Lassus no. 134, for correct date)
2. Il-Mishrifeh	344	Inscription of village official (*kōmarchos*) *et alii*. Pre-Christian (Prentice 881=IGLS 1908)
	453/4	Lintel with cross. Christian. Prentice 882=IGLS 1901)
	n.d.	Cross. "This conquers." (Prentice 886=IGLS 1907)

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[363] These texts represent, once again, conversion to Christian monotheism and the rejection of the previous Semitic divinities.

	n.d.	Christian presbyter (Prentice 883=IGLS 1903)
3. Tell ed-Dahab	469/70	Christian church (Prentice 849=IGLS 1922)
	489	Inscription of phrourarch. Christian. (Prentice 850=IGLS 1924)
4. Sa‘n es-Se‘n	477/8	Lintel. Chi-Rho. Cross (IGLS 1849)
5. Tell ‘Abd el-‘Aziz	492/3	Lintel. Cross
(=Ardē Anōtera?)	n.d.	(IGLS 1987)
	n.d.	"O cross, conquer always!" Cross. Alpha-Omega. (IGLS 1984)
6. Sheikh Ali Kasūn (=ancient Zeboudis?)	n.d.	Salamanis the *periodeutes.* (Prentice 818–819=IGLS 1935)
	506	Lintel. Cross. (Prentice 810=IGLS 1937)
7. Er-Ruḥaiyeh	373	House. Pagan. Spolia in church. (Prentice 896=IGLS 1877)
	529/30	Lintel. Cross. (Prentice 897=IGLS 1882)
8. Tamak	540	Castle gate. Cross. "Holy Maria, be the help of Sergius!" (IGLS 1957)
9. Kōme Olbanōn (present-day Halbān)	362	" . . . of Heliodorus always conquers." Pagan. (Prentice 869=IGLS 1890)
	n.d.	"One God only, who helps the humble man." (IGLS 1891)
	541 or 543	Tower. Christian. (Prentice 871=IGLS 1889)
10. Sabba‘	494/5 or 578/9	Lintel. Cross. (Prentice 823=IGLS 1970)
	543	No cross. (Prentice 821=IGLS 1971)
	547	"(Cross) . . . The Lord of this house will guard the entrance and exit. For when the cross lies exposed, the evil eye will have no power." (Prentice 822=IGLS 1969)

The earliest of these villages to be Christianized, so far as the evidence permits a judgement, was Tell Snān before c. 439/40, but there were perhaps Hellenes in the place thereafter because no one thought it expedient to incise a cross on the lintel of the *hypogeum* or subterranean tomb laid in 471. What with the general lack of Christian inscriptions in the *territorium* of Epiphaneia before that date, there is no objection to there being pagans at Tell Snān on the ground of plausibility. There is no sign of Christianity at all in the fourth-century epigraphy at il-Mishrifeh, er-Ruhaiyeh, or Kōmē Olbanōn. The coming of the new religion was a late development in the district, and so it is best to put the undated Christian inscriptions after 450, and particularly those that express militant ideas like the quasi-Constantinian "(Cross) This conquers!" at il-Mishrifeh (after c. 453/4?), the Chi-Rho of 477/8 at Sa'n es-Se'n, and "O cross, conquer always!" at Ardē Anōtera (after 492/3?). This formula quite obviously replaced the personal victory statements of the sort proclaimed by Heliodorus at Kōmē Olbanōn (362 A.D.). Monotheistic formularies are almost entirely lacking except at Kōmē Olbanōn. This suggests a blasé attitude to Christianization that came partly as an act of political subservience during the persecutions of the emperors Zeno (c. 481–488) and Justinian (from 529 onward).[364] Few Christians felt the urge to distinguish themselves from the polytheists because the latter were formally under ban and most or all had formally become Christian catechumens or accepted baptism at these sites.

A firm Christian institutional presence is only indicated at il-Mishrifeh by the presence of a presbyter (c. 453/4?) and at Tell ed-Dahab, where a church was in operation by 469/70 and a Christian fortess commander named Besson made a personal attestation of his adherence to the new religion in 489 (+ ἐπὶ Βέσσωνος φρ(ουράρχου). It is uncertain when the church at er-Ruhaiyeh was built, but it belongs in all probability to the beginnings of the Justinianic suppression of paganism. Military men also supported the official cult at Tamak in 540 and apparently at Kōmē Olbanōn in 541 or 543. These men without much doubt provided coercive support as heavily armed exemplars of the Christian polity being implemented by Justinian after 529.[365] Yet a *periodeutēs* like the Arab Salamanes (Suleimān) attested at ancient Zeboudis (c. 506?) certainly played an important role in the earlier stages of this process.

The crosses erected on house lintels indicated not only Christian monotheism but also an abiding hope in their apotropaic power, as

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[364] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 6.

[365] Cf. the public baptism of a soldier prior to the sailing of Belisarius' expedition against Vandal Africa in 533. Procopius, *Wars* 3.12.2.

Erik Peterson has argued.[366] The most convincing example of this tendency in all the inscriptions surveyed so far is found at Sabba‘, where fear of the evil eye is expressed (τοῦ σταυροῦ γὰρ προκιμένου οὐ(κ) ἰσχύ[σει ὀφθαλμὸς βάσκα]νος). Anxiety about this activity was common among pagans and Christians alike, but the extant inscriptions usually stipulate other weapons than the cross against the "eyes of those who possess the evil eye" (φθονερῶν ὄμματα).[367] For example, a column in a presumed church in the *territorium* of ancient Dokimon in Phrygia supplies a prayer for the reader to memorize that will dismiss the sorcery (ὁ φθόνος) in the name of the Christian God "who exhibits no evil eye (ὃς ἀφθόνως παρέχι) towards those who hope in him."[368] The force of the cross is summed up elsewhere in a literary fragment attributed to Athanasius of Alexandria:[369]

> Amulets and magic rituals are vain helping devices. If anyone has made use of them, let him know this plainly, that he has made himself an unbeliever instead of a believer. . . . For if an old man spews out an incantation of the serpent for the sake of 20 obols or for a quart of wine, and you stand there like a donkey with its mouth gaping open, wearing on your neck the filth of animals and avoid making the sign of the cross, [you are a poor Christian]. Not only do sicknesses fear this sign, but also the entire array of *daimones* fears it and is astonished at it. Wherefore every magician is also unsealed [by the sign of the cross].

Athanasius' quaint cautionary tale has the same force as the inscription of 546/7 at Sabba‘. It is once again the sign of the cross, whether on one's door lintel or made over his face, that deprives the *daimones* of their power in acts of sorcery (τὴν σφραγῖδα τοῦ σωτηρίου σταυροῦ).[370] The village of Sabba‘ may have been only recently Christianized, as there is another lintel inscription of 543 that has no cross, and the date of its other Christian inscription is far from certain (494/5 or 578/9). The need for this kind of display seems to have been felt keenly in communities recently Christianized as a safeguard against the "daimonic rage" or hostile kratophanies of the dispossessed gods, but in equal measure against the *daimones* thought to activate the evil eye.[371]

The Sabba‘ inscription of 546/7 has perhaps one other connection with the polytheistic ethos, that being the expression "the Lord of this house" ([τοῦ οἴκο]υ τούτου κύριος). While the phrase is Christian by intention, it seems to hark back to the title of an earlier deity who was the "lord of the house" (*rabb al-bayt*), that is, the master of a temple somewhere in the southeastern part of Djebel il-'Alā.[372] It is impossible to suggest an entirely satisfactory identity for such a divinity simply because the local epigraphy is silent. The single altar noted in J. Lassus' survey of Djebel il'Alā, found at Ras el-'Ain and dated 165 A.D., seems to have been for funerary sacrifices at the tomb of a certain Zoilos.[373]

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[366] Infra, Appendix V.

[367] H. Leclercq, "Amulettes," *DACL* 1/2 1845.

[368] Ibid. 1843f.

[369] Ibid. 1789. Cf. PG 26, 1319.

[370] Cf. supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 1.

[371] Supra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 2.

IX. Conclusions

The evidence of the epigraphy permits an expansion of the generalizations about Christianization into coherent and empirically grounded chronological and demographic dimensions. The new religion spread through northern Syria at rates that differed from massif to massif and from village to village. Some local contexts, like that round Djebel Sim'ān, were mostly Christian before 400. It is striking that the foundation of the monastery of Symeon Stylites the Elder was really posterior to the process, and so Symeon concentrated instead on Syrians from other districts and allogenous folk like Arabs, Turks, and Iranians. It was the regular clergy of Antioch that Christianized the rest of the Limestone Massif between 365–425, beginning with visits by the *periodeutai* and ending with the construction of churches and the installation of presbyters. The exception to this rule seems to have been low-lying Djebel Ḥalaqah, which remained mostly pagan in the fifth century except at Sermada, where Christianity began at quite an early date. It is quite evident that the new religion grew up in isolated pockets in some districts, and that polytheism survived in analogous circumstances elsewhere.

Furthermore, there do not seem to have been "mass conversions" at the village level, as the protracted series of dated "One God" inscriptions at many sites indicates. The agriculturalists quite obviously made their own decisions about forsaking the ancient Baals and Astartes on an individual basis and on the seemingly objective merits of the case. There is really no justification for disdaining the reflective powers of the seemingly inchoate mass of rustics. To the contrary, their funerary and lintel inscriptions reflect an individuality of approach that is quite striking, as for example that of Abedrapsas, a villager of fourth-century Frīkya in the Apamean part of Djebel Rīḥa.[374]

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[372] Cf. supra, Ch. X, Sect. 6 (several examples). Cf. the probable use of an analogous expression, supra, Appendix I, Sect. 1.

[373] Lassus, *Inventaire*, 202–204, no. 124.

The existence of rural literacy in Syria demonstrated in a previous chapter provides decisive proof that the expressions of piety found in the inscriptions were not simply formulaic statements imposed on the householders by an aggressive clergy.[375] A partial exception to this rule may exist in the case of Dar Qīta in Djebel Barīsha. Here the "One God" formulary was renewed continuously down to 515 A.D. If one had doubts about the monotheism of his neighbors elsewhere, there could be no question of it in this village, which was perhaps an ecclesiastical estate and mecca for recently converted rustics.

The patriarchs of Antioch displayed great efficiency in the Christianization of the countryside. It was somewhat different in Second Syria under the metropolitans of Apamea. Here the record is a bit more fragmentary and has been subject to historical distortion. Some villages of the Apamene were turning Christian well before Marcellus of Apamea began his search and destroy missions against the rural temples. It is furthermore evident that, for all his panache, this bishop relied a great deal on the sound administrative practice of implanting churches and presbyters in villages where the rustics were becoming Christian. It should be obvious, finally, that the terror of the 380's did not *ipso facto* guarantee the eradication of polytheism from the Apamene. The first traces of Christianity do not turn up at some villages in Djebel Rīḥa until the first quarter of the fifth century and even later. This tendency is even more pronounced at Djebel il'Alā in the south, where the main period of transition was the third quarter of the fifth century. Sites lying on major traffic arteries like Tarutia Emporōn experienced this first (later 4th c.), but it took a century longer for the many backwaters of the Apamene.

Additional note: For the formula "One God and his Christ" in the context of fifth-century conversion from polytheism, see the life of St. Sharbil in *Ancient Syriac Documents*, edd. W. Cureton and W. Wright (London 1864), 63. For the date, see Segal, *Edessa*, 82.

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[374] Supra, Ch. X, Sect. 6.

[375] Supra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 4.

APPENDIX V

THE "ONE GOD" INSCRIPTIONS

There can be little doubt that the Christian use of the "One God" formula in the inscriptions of the Limestone Massif and elsewhere is to be understood as a statement of monotheistic belief *vis à vis* the villagers' abandonment of polytheism. This is emphatically the case, if only because their dated sequence in the different local contexts invariably puts them among the very earliest Christian inscriptions. It seems inevitable that scholars looking for obscure heresies will lay a different interpretation on these texts.[1] Similarly, the henotheistic use of the formula in such phrases as "One Zeus Sarapis" is bound to raise other questions about the origin and peculiarly varied proliferation of the "One God" idea. Be this as it may, the Syrian Christian use of the formula can be explained as a conveniently brief adaptation of a significant passage from the New Testament (I Cor. 8.4–6) which contrasts Christian monotheism with the Hellenic multiplicity of gods, veneration of idols, and consumption of sacrificial meats:

> So concerning the eating of meats offered to idols, we know that there is no idol in the world and that there is no God unless he is One. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in the sky or on the earth, as though there were many gods and many lords, yet for us there is One God the father from whom all things are and we are in him, and there is One Lord Jesus Christ through whom all things are, and we through him.

Origen cites this passage twice in his polemic *Contra Celsum* (4.29 and 8.4) in contexts that refute polytheism. A number of texts has been cited elsewhere in this work that emphatically underscore this particular usage of the Christian "One God" formula. Among these are the statements incised on the Isis temple at Philae during its conversion to a Christian shrine after the synoikism of cults had ended there;[2] the exclamation of "One God" by a Christian monk upon beholding an array of idols and a bloody altar at the Isis temple of Canopus ("He cried out 'One God' in Coptic, as he wished to say that *it was necessary to extirpate the error of polytheism.*");[3] and the deliberate juxtaposition of "One God who helps" with crosses next to a pagan prayer for a cure to a triad of divinities in a temple at Deir el-Bahari in Egypt.[4]

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[1] Jacques Jarry, "Datierungsprobleme in Nordsyrien," *Tyche* 3 (1988), 129–134. It is worth noting here that the use of the "One God" formula by Christians precedes both the Arian and Monophysite controversies. Cf. the Christian "One God only" inscription of Aurelius Demetris which is dated to 287/8 A.D. It was found in the village of Juweikat near the great temenos of the Baal Baitochichi in Mt. Lebanon. IGLS 4041. Cf. supra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 2.

One gets little sense of this as a primary contextual usage of the "One God" formula from Erik Peterson's *EIC ΘEOC*: *Epigraphische, formgeschichtliche und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Göttingen: 1926). It is a fine piece of work, but shares one weakness of the Form-critical school in its formal disregard of the pragmatic side of the question, that is, the ordinary adaptive use to which the village clergy and their congregations put the phrase under discussion here. Peterson's work is a mine of information about the different applications of the "One God" formula, including liturgical contexts (130ff.), acclamations (141ff.), its use in amulets and other small objects (81ff.), and the problems connected with the "One Zeus Sarapis" formula (227ff.). It emerges that the Christian "One God" is quite rare in the epigraphy of Asia Minor, but is used there more often in pagan henotheistic contexts (77f.). While quite numerous in Egypt, the Christian variants are mostly undated and are therefore of little help in working out the problems of conversion there (47–77). We are thus thrown back on the dated Syrian texts, and so it is hoped that the foregoing chapter will clarify this question to some extent. Two of the more interesting examples cited by Peterson require brief notice. The first of these is a "One God who helps" text from Deir el-Bahari. It is accompanied with incised palm leaves and an Ankh cross, symbols of the old polytheism now integrated into the Christian scheme (56). Another text, from the Aegean island of Kos, refers simply to the "One God in the sky" (εἷς Θεὼ[ς] ἐν οὐρανῶ[ι])(78). It has a clear relationship to other Christian texts and inscriptions that reject a multiplicity of divinities in sky and sea and earth.[5]

There was in any case a clear distinction between Hellenic henotheism and Christian monotheism. On the former Campbell Bonner observes:[6]

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[2] Supra, Ch. IX, Sect. 4.

[3] Supra, Ch. IX, Sect. 2.

[4] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 2.

[5] Cf. supra, Ch. IV, Sect. 5.

[6] Campbell Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian* (Ann Arbor 1950), 174f. Bonner cites several examples of this, including a miracle

> When used of a pagan god, εἷς expresses the great power or the preëminence of the deity, rather than definitely monotheistic belief.

On the latter:[7]

> Εἷς Θεός in a strictly religious sense must be regarded as an expression of monotheistic faith, and is rightly held to be of Jewish origin. It was taken over by the Christians and appears on a great number of bronze pendants, mainly of *Syrian* and Palestinian origin, which have on one side the Rider saint with the motto "One God who conquers evil," and on the other, usually, some apotropaic device directed against the evil eye.

Yet Xenophanes of Colophon's famous dictum rather closely resembles the Psalmist's view that the God of Israel is the God of gods:[8]

> There is one god, greatest among gods and men, who is like mortals neither in bodily shape nor in thought.

In conclusion, it is worth quoting two poems composed by Basavanna (1106–1167), a devotee of Siva in medieval India whose rejection of the formalism of Vedic ritual caused him to affirm monotheism in the name of his god. The first refers to images of the gods:[9]

> How can I feel right about a god who eats up lacquer and melts, who wilts when he sees fire? How can I feel right about gods you sell in your need, and gods you bury for fear of thieves? The Lord of the Meeting Rivers, self-born, one with himself, he alone is god.

The monotheistic statement of the second poem rejects the vanity of lesser divinities:[10]

> The pot is a god. The winnowing fan is a god. The stone in the street is a god. The comb is a god. The bowstring is also a god. The bushel is a god and the spouted cup is a god. Gods, gods, there are so many there's no place left for a foot. There is only one god. He is our Lord of the Meeting rivers.

Basavanna's latter statement is thematically consistent with Augustine's criticism of the lesser beings of the Roman pantheon in the *City of God*.

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supposedly worked by Sarapis in *P. Oxy.*, 1382, and such variants as "One god Sarapis", "One Zeus Sarapis", "One Zeus Asklepios", etc.—all from Petersons's *EIC ΘEOC*.

[7] Bonner, *Magical Amulets*, 174.

[8] Xenophanes of Colophon, Fr. 23 in G.S. Kirk and J.E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge 1983), 169.

[9] Basavanna, *Mālēśvara*, 558, in *Speaking of Śiva*, tr. A.K. Ramanujan (London 1973), 84.

[10] Basavanna, *Mālēśvara*, 563, in *Speaking of Śva*, 84.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE BOSTRENE, DJEBEL HAURAN, AND THE LEDJĀ

The large number of early Christian inscriptions found in northern Syria is paralleled by conditions in the Hauran, a district that included many of the areas formerly belonging to the Nabataean Arab kingdom which the emperor Trajan incorporated into the empire in 106 A.D.[1] The province of Arabia, which had its metropolis at Bostra, survived little modified as an entity in the Later Roman Empire, and consisted of several topographically distinct zones which lie generally east-northeast of the Jordan river valley on the far side of Djebel Ajlūn. Among these zones are the Hauran plain, on which Bostra lies, the Djebel Hauran (also called Djebel Drūz), the Batanea to its north west, and the district called the Ledjā or Trachonitis.

The inscriptions collected by the Princeton Expeditions of 1904–5 and 1909, and those of Waddington's collection, make up the principal evidence for any analysis of the decline of polytheism and Christianization of the countryside in the Hauran.[2] The rules of analysis vary considerably, however, from those encountered in northern Syria. For one thing, the "One God" inscriptions turn up in smaller numbers. Christian inscriptions are, in general, rarer in the rural Hauran, particularly those from the fourth century. Even with the cautionary dictum of avoiding too broad a generalization because of the random survival of inscriptions, it appears that the new religion hardly penetrated the countryside before the fifth century and that many villages remained unconverted in the sixth century.

Another consideration is the ethnic character of the Hauran. The great majority of persons attested in the epigraphy, apart from those with Greek and Latin names, came from Arabic-speaking stock, this a direct result of the sedentarization of the Nabataean Arabs and the subsequent arrival of new contingents which seem to have practiced pastoralism and lived in symbiosis with the villages. The ethnically Arabic character of the rustic population of the Hauran is much more strongly pronounced than that of northern Syria, where the Aramaic-Syriac dialects prevailed. Even so, the majority of the Late Roman inscriptions of the Hauran are cut in Greek. It can hardly be doubted that the villages had undergone rudimentary Hellenization from Nabataean times onward, even if the level of literacy was not high. Finally, and this is an important factor in adjusting the chronology of Christianization, dedications to the various Arabic deities turn up with much later dates than in northern Syria, even in the late fourth century. The axiom that cultural formations persist beyond the temporal limits of the evidence finds application here as well, particularly as very many fifth- and sixth-century inscriptions contain not the slightest trace of the new religion, neither crosses nor the other symbols which accompany the Christian epigraphy of other districts.

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[1] On the formation of the province, see Bowersock, *Roman Arabia*. On the material culture: Rudolf E. Brünnow and Alfred von Domaszewski, *Die Provincia Arabia* 3 (Strasbourg 1909). Cf. J.-M. Dentzer, *Hauran I: 1–2* (Paris 1985–86).

[2] *Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904–5 and 1909, Division III: Greek and Latin Inscriptions, Section A: Southern Syria, Parts 2–7*, edd. Enno Littmann, David Magie and D.R. Stuart (Leiden 1921). Hereinafter cited as Littmann, PAES III A. *Recueil des inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*, ed. W.H. Waddington (Paris 1870), nos. 1826–2724. A small number of additional inscriptions has come to light, and are published in SEG 7.

The metropolis of the district, Bostra, which lies west of Djebel Hauran on the Hauran plain, had a Christian community from the earliest times and its own bishop at the time of the Council of Nicaea in 325.[3] Emperor Julian the Apostate estimated that c. 362/3 the city had a population half-Christian and half-pagan,[4] as he might well know, for his agents were active in restoring the temples and traditional sacrifices not only at Bostra, but in the villages round about as well.[5] Christianity had begun to radiate outward to some of the larger communities well before the time of Julian. The very large suburban *kōmopolis* or village-city of Umm el-Jimal, whose ancient name is unknown, had a Christian *nekropolis* at an early date, by 344, as a very agrammatical inscription records:[6]

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[3] On the period up to c. 400, see: Maurice Sartre, *Bostra, des origines à l'Islam* (Paris 1985), 99–108.

[4] Julian the Apostate, "To the Bostrenes," Ep. 41 (Wright 3, 132f.).

[5] Sartre, *Bostra* 106 and n. 64. Infra , Ch. XI, Sect. 1–3. We learn of the temple of an unnamed divinity being constructed "from the foundations up" in 320 by the *duumviri* or urban executive board of Bostra. Waddington 1910. The temple treasurers at Damascus engaged in some construction work not long after Julian became sole emperor. Waddington, 2551a. Cf. Waddington 2549.

[6] Littmann, PAES III A, 262. I have departed from Littmann's translation of several key words.

> This is the memorial of Julianos, weighed down by long sleep, for whom his father Agathos built it while shedding a tear beside the boundary of the communal cemetery of the people of Christ, in order that a better people might always sing of him openly, being formerly the beloved faithful [son?] of Agathos the presbyter, aged twelve. In the year 239 [of the era of the Provincia Arabia]. (344 A.D.)

The inscription carries several hints which suggest that Umm el-Jimal was far from being completely Christianized at this time. The cemetery of the "people of Christ" (κοιμητήριον λαοῦ Χρειστοῦ) had a delimited boundary (τέρμα)—the lintel block of the tomb was not, unfortunately, discovered *in situ*—and was communal (κοινός), and thus set apart. One can hardly doubt that a pagan *nekropolis* also existed somewhere *extra muros*, but the epigraphic finds reveal little on this point. The expression "a better people" (ἀμείνων . . . λαός), which repeats the term for "people" (λαός) used in "people of Christ", can hardly mean "better folk" in an ethical or economic sense, as Enno Littmann implies, but must be taken in the sense that the people of Christ were the "better" people of corporate body in the *kōmopolis* because of their religious allegiance, in other words Christians as opposed to Hellenes. Such terminology in no sense implies a real conflict, although later sources suggest possible militancy between the competing cults at Bostra at the instigation of Julian the Apostate's agents.[7]

The cults of Umm el-Jimal lasted into Late Antiquity, as the altar inscriptions attest. One of the more popular deities named is Dousares (Δουσάρει Ααρρα),[8] a descendant of the Nabataean Dushara A'ra, whose idol lay in Bostra before the incorporation of Arabia into the Roman Empire in 106 and whose Hellenized typology resembled that of Zeus.[9] Another deity was the god Selem (θεῷ Σολμῳ),[10] about whom little or nothing can be said.[11] These and other altars derive perhaps from the third century.[12] The process by which these cults died out and how long they persisted is unknown.

The Julianos inscription demonstrates the presence of a Christian cemetery and presbyter to officiate at the liturgy by 344, an early example of the phenomenon compared with rural northern

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[7] This is directly stated in Julian's letter to the Bostrenes (1 August 362). For citation, supra, Ch. XI, n. 4.

[8] Littmann, PAES III A, 238.

[9] Javier Texidor, *The Pagan God* (Princeton 1977), 85f. Dominique Sourdel, *Les Cultes du Hauran à l'époque romaine* (Paris 1952), 59–68.

[10] Littmann, PAES III A, 239.

[11] Sourdel, *Cultes du Hauran*, 87.

[12] Other altars: Littmann, PAES III A, 240–242.

Syria. A certain Bassos the *primicerius*, an agent of Flavius Pelagius, the *dux* or supreme cavalry commander of Arabia, who held senatorial rank (*clarissimus* = λαμπρότατος) and the office of count, built or repaired the castle of Umm el-Jimal in 412/3 and attached the Chi-Rho Christogram to the inscription commemorating the construction of the fortress (κάστελλος), but would have been essentially an outsider.[13] The cult of the angels became popular with some persons at Umm el-Jimal in the fifth or sixth century,[14] but the earliest Christian inscriptions distinctively datable by letter forms belong to the very late fifth century or later.[15] None of the pagan funerary inscriptions, on the other hand, can be dated later than the fourth century with certainty, and most of them may well be earlier than this.[16] The steles in question, some 237 in number, lack all indications of cult. The persons named on them bear mostly Arabic names and have no attested trades or professions. One is inclined to view these folk as the pre-Christian population of Umm el-Jimal, but it is impossible to affix an economic identity to them, even as to whether they were pastoralists or sedentary. All one can really say is that they were certainly Arabs of Nabataean stock with a rudimentary literacy in Greek, and that they undoubtedly worshipped Dusares, the principal deity in the pantheon of Bostra. To this it should be added that a single "One God" inscription, which we have taken in the previous chapter often to be an indicator of recent conversion, accompanied by a cross in a square, has turned up, and appears to belong to the fourth century.[17] A block of sixth-century date bears the legend: "(Cross) This [sign] (Cross) conquers [and] helps."[18] This suggests that the Christianization of Umm el-Jimal was still in progress in the time of emperor Anastasius I (491–518) or later.

It cannot be said how Christianity originally penetrated Umm el-Jimal. As a large suburb of Bostra, however, it probably received its church, cemetery, and presbyter no later than the early fourth century. No reason exists to doubt that the site had largely gone over to the religion between the typical *termini* established for northern Syria in the previous chapter, to wit, c. 363–420. The

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[13] Littmann, PAES III A, 237.

[14] Littmann, PAES III A, 245–248.

[15] The basis for this dating is the presence of the omicron-upsilon ligature. Littmann, PAES III A, 249–251, 253, 258.

[16] Littmann, PAES III A, 286–522. I refer here to the rounded uncials, the characteristic letter forms of the 2nd–4th c. A.D.

[17] Littmann, PAES III A, 270.

[18] Littmann, PAES III A, 251, with the omicron-upsilon ligature (6th c. or later).

Julianos inscription implies the survival of a pre-Christian community in 344. It certainly lasted for a few decades beyond that date. Umm el-Jimal was the most urbanized settlement in the *territorium* of Bostra. One is inclined to regard the smaller villages as subject to a slower rate of religious transformation. Let us consider the other cases.

The Hauran may be divided into approximately three zones: 1) The Bostrene or Hauran plain, as it extends along the east-west military highway which passes through Bostra and then along the southern spurs of Djebel Hauran toward the eastern frontier of the province; 2) Djebel Hauran itself, a high and irregular plateau cut by many wadis and high eminences; and 3) The three districts to the north, variously called the Batanea, il-Ledjā, and Trachonitis, which extend from the northern and western spurs of the Djebel Hauran and lead into broad flatlands. The last zone, although located on the plains, was relatively distant from urbanized areas and therefore somewhat different from the sites around Bostra. It will be assumed, pending empirical demonstration, that the Christianization of these three zones lagged somewhat behind that of the metropolis Bostra and *kōmopolis* Umm el-Jimal because of their essentially urban character, and that one might safely expect isolated villages, particularly those in the Djebel Hauran, which measures some thirty-five by twenty miles in extent, to have been Christianized later than those under the direct influence of the episcopate at Bostra.

1. The Bostrene

The Bostrene may be divided into western and eastern sections. In the west, villages radiate in every direction from Bostra. Some twenty miles to the east of Bostra, another group of villages radiates round about the large village and fortress of Salkhad, the ancient Salcha. Let us consider the western group of villages around Bostra first, among which Umm el-Jimal has already been taken into account as the primary example.

One begins to see a definite lag in the process of Christianization once away from Bostra and Umm el-Jimal. The westernmost village of Il-Umtā'īyeh reveals a lintel with a very fragmentary inscription of 330/1 A.D. recording the expenditure of monies from the treasury of a deity whose name is lost, but who received the salutation of "Lord" (Κύριος):[19]

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[19] Littmann, PAES III A, 37.

> [It was built f]rom the funds of Lord [---] the overseers [---]ros and Bachros and [---] having taken care. . . .

The overseers (ἐπίσκοποι) or executive committee of the village council expended monies from the treasury of an unknown god ([ἐ]κ τῶν τοῦ Κυ[ρίου---]). The identification of these funds as religious monies is suggested by certain common parallel phrases in the regional epigraphy, such as "from the funds of Lord Zeus" (ἐκ τῶν τοῦ κυρίου Διός)[20] and "from the funds of the god" (ἐκ τῶν τοῦ θεοῦ).[21] The headmen of il-Umtāʻīyeh were thus still pagan c. 330/1. The first Christian inscriptions, written in squared uncials and with large crosses, came no earlier than c. 380–420. By that time the village council had accepted the new religion. The lintel of a doorway leading to a courtyard near an early church has it that:[22]

> Qaiyâm built [this] for God, the Alpha and the Omega. Lord, make this sign be set up. (Cross in circle) Remember your temple, Lord Christ. The court of a village headman (πρωτοκω(μήτου)).

It is of interest that the titles of the headmen were changed from *episkopoi* ("overseers") to *prōtokōmētai* during the half-century or so that passed as the village was Christianized. An inscription c. 500 or later, having a more recent type of cross with divided tips, contains the standard victory formula: "Christ conquers. Christ rules as emperor" (Χ(ριστὸ)ς νικᾷ. Χ(ριστὸ)ς βασιλ[εύει]).[23] A church inscription with the same style of cross reads: "It conquers. (Cross) It conquers" (Ν(ι)κ(ᾷ) ☩ ν(ι)κ(ᾷ).[24] Christianization thus seems to have remained an issue even c. 500 or later. This is not an improbable reality in light of the known penetration of pagan Arab pastoralists into zones populated by other sedentarized Arabs.

Two neighboring villages may not have been Christianized until the mid-fifth century. Umm is-Surab had its only known church, a shrine (μ[νημεῖον] or μ[εμώριον]) dedicated to the martyrs Sergius—a popular saint among the Arabs—and Bacchus, built in

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[20] Waddington, 1879.

[21] Waddington, 1990, 2544.

[22] Littmann, PAES III A, 38.

[23] Littmann, PAES III A, 40. The date is based, once again, on the recurrence of the now familiar omicron-upsilon ligature.

[24] Two crosses of this type appear on inscriptions, or parts of them, that have sixth-century omicron-upsilon ligatures. The cross is apparently, therefore, a popular variant of c. 500 or later which often replaced the earlier inscribed cross. Cf. Littmann, PAES III A, 38, which has an early inscribed cross with a square uncial text (c. 380–420?), and a later group of letters using the omicron-upsilon ligature and a later cross with divided points.

September 489. Its founders were both Arabs, ‘Amr and Kyros, sons of Ulpian.[25] At Ghaṣm, on the main road west of Bostra, the lintel with crosses of a building (κτίσμα) erected by a woman named Megalē at her own expense, belongs c. 400 or later.[26]

Djemmerin, a village only two kilometers north of Bostra, has a group of inscriptions with indications suggestive of Christianization *ante* c. 400, not a surprising possibility in view of the site's proximity to Bostra. The earliest of them stands on a lintel which has no cross, but contains a Christian "code" word: "Aurelia built [this] after the death of her husband Domitian in the year 295." (=400/1 A.D.)[27] The word used for "death" is the Greek term meaning "repose" or "rest" (ἀνάπαυσις), which has the connotation of "rest in eternity" or "peace". Similarly, another inscription, this one of 479, lacks a cross, but one of the persons named in it bore the name Elias.[28] Finally, the military squadrons which moved along the east-west highway, that is the cavalry squadrons (*arithmoi* or *numeri*), erected at least one Christian tomb in Djemmerin out of its own fisc in 414 (Ἐ(ν)θάδε τάφον ε[---] ἐκ καμάτων στρατίης).[29] It is impossible to say how many locally recruited Arabs made up the squadrons, but the local count and his subordinates who commanded the *arithmoi* of the province were either Christian or at any rate felt compelled to act according to Christian sentiments, for the inscription is accompanied by a large cross. These considerations will be applied later in the discussion, for the Hauran has yielded many inscriptions of Late Roman date with neither crosses nor Christian key words, and seem thus to be pagan.

When one turns to the southeast of Bostra, in the direction of Ṣmād, the picture of Christianization begins to change somewhat. At this village one finds a lintel dated 327, over which were cut crosses that partially obliterated some letters of the inscriptions. The original owners of the building were the Arabs Shai‘ son of Khairān and Severus son of Ghiyai. The lintel with its later defacements provides a *terminus post quem* for the conversion of Ṣmād. The date is pushed later by another inscription on a block which appears to be a sacrificial altar. It reads: "May you have good luck! Executed by ‘Add son of Severus and ‘Azīz son son of Hann'ēl in the year 280" (=385 A.D.).[30] This suggests that the local cults may have persisted as late as c. 400. An undated inscription with the normally Christian expression "Here lies" (ἐνθάδε κεῖται) belongs probably to the fifth century.[31]

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[25] Littmann, PAES III A, 51. Further research would certainly prove the existence of many Latinate names used by Arabs in consequence of taking service in the Late Roman army.

[26] Littmann, PAES III A, 618.

[27] Littmann, PAES III A, 604.

[28] Littmann, PAES III A, 605.

[29] Littmann, PAES III A, 603.

The picture of Christianization changes even more radically in the eastern parts of the Hauran plain, where it reaches the foothills of Djebel Hauran, whence villages radiate in every direction from present-day Salkhad, the ancient Salcha. Ample epigraphic evidence has survived to prove that the old cults remained strong in these parts until the end of the fourth century, and that Christianity necessarily took root later there than in the area around Bostra.

Salkhad, a large village on a dominating hill, lies some twelve miles east of Bostra on the military highway leading to the eastern frontier. The lettering technique used in the inscriptions there is much cruder than that found in the more westerly villages around the metropolis. Arabic, Greek, and Latinate personal names predominate. The last sure reference to the old cults, that of an unknown god, survives in an inscription of 252 A.D. which records the construction of a building by the overseers or headmen (ἐπίσκοποι) of Salcha, Thaimos, Sabaos, Bassos son of Ulpius, and Bordos. The monies came from the fisc of the god (ἐκ τῶν τοῦ θεοῦ ἔκτισαν).[32] The earliest identifiable Christian inscription after this falls in 497, well over two centuries later.[33] The epigraphy before 497 shows no trace of the new religion, consisting primarily of funerary and building inscriptions. Their dates are 322, 345, 351, 369, 377, 380, 392, 403, and 419.[34] As the sequence is quite extensive, with nine dated inscriptions falling between the *termini* 252–497 A.D., it is justifiable to put the Christianization of Salkhad in the mid- or late fifth century.

An examination of the society and culture revealed by the inscriptions helps explain this phenomenon. Salkhad was ruled by, or had as its immediate and influential neighbors, a group of Arab chieftains (ὄρχαμοι) still conscious of their clan or tribal origins, as the latest pre-Christian inscription in the series (419 A.D.) indicates:[35]

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[30] Littmann, PAES III A, 62.

[31] Littmann, PAES III A, 64, with square uncials.

[32] Waddington, 1990. An earlier inscription at Salcha from 169–70 A.D. records the erection of a building from the "sacred funds" of the place (ἐκ τῶν ἱερατικῶν ἐκτ[ίσθη]). Littmann, PAES III A, 155. Baal-Shamin was worshipped here in Nabataean times, as we learn from the cult-stone inscription of a certain 'Ubaid son of 'Uṭaifik. Salcha also contained a cult-stone dedicated to Allāt, "the lady of the place" (*l-'alh rb-t'l'atr*). *Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904–5 and 1909, Division IV: Semitic Inscriptions, Section A: Nabataean Inscriptions from the Southern Ḥaurân*, ed. Enno Littmann (Leiden 1914), nos. 23, 24. This collection is hereinafter cited as PAES IV A.

[33] Waddington, 1995.

[34] Waddington, 1998–2004. Littmann, PAES III A, 158–160, 167.

> This far-famed tomb, at once a great boast for living men and a place of repose for the dead, the chieftains completed. Milk, a man excellent in counsel and law-abiding, son of [---] and his dear brothers with him. All of them sprang from the 'Audh-'ēl, In the year 314 (=419 A.D.)

Milk, a chieftain of the 'Audh-'ēl clan and his brothers sat on a sort of council, but this was probably a tribal body independent of the headmen of Salcha. His excellence in counsel and knowledge of law ([βουλῇ ἄρισ]τος καὶ εὔνομος Μίλχος ἀνήρ) evidently related to the traditional, unwritten law of the bedouin who had settled in and around Salcha. Families were apparently large, and will probably have practiced pastoralism even at the time of their settlement, or more accurately localization, at the village.

The inscriptions of Salcha mention no trade except that of builders, of whom most have Arabic names. A tomb of 345 had four builders (οἰκοδόμοι), of whom two, Thaimos and Authos ('Awd), were Arabs.[36] Another lintel, this one of 403 A.D., mentions three builders, one of them a certain Rabb from a place called Borechtha Sabaōn (who may have been a Syrian), and two Arabs, presumably locals, named 'Awd and Ḥabibat.[37] Rabb, presumably the most literate of the group, referred to his profession as that of ὐκοδόμος (sic). Other trades at Salcha are unknown, but the site was sufficiently prosperous for persons who had endured economic hardship in youth to rise. For example, one hears of a certain Bassos, reared as an orphan (Βάσσος Ἀνδρομάχου ὀρφανὸς ἀνατραφείς), who eventually had a family (μετὰ τέκνων) and erected a tomb (μνῆμα) for himself in 369 A.D.,[38] an interesting note on the character of pre-Christian society. Children at times received Greek names. An inscription of 377 mentions a Zenodoros, son of Thubai', and his wife named Maxima (Ζηνόδωρος Τοβέου [κὲ Μά]ξιμα γυνὴ αὐτοῦ),[39] which might be taken as an example of Hellenization, except that the phenomenon worked in the reverse direction as well, as for example one Soleos son of Zenodoros

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[35] Littmann, PAES III A, 160.
[36] Waddington, 1999.
[37] Littmann, PAES III A, 159.
[38] Waddington, 2001.
[39] Waddington, 2002.

(Σολεος Ζηνοδώρου) in 380 A.D.[40] It is difficult to determine the ethnic character of Salcha, which probably consisted of rudimentarily Hellenized Arabs with a small admixture of Greeks. Army veterans indisputably settled there, for a tomb inscription of 345 A.D. mentions two men, Ambrilios and Zenon, sons of Alexander Kattios (an ethnic of some kind), who served as *ordinarii* in the office of the *praeses*, or military governor, of Arabia.[41] The later settlement of veterans at Salcha cannot be excluded, as it lay near the *limes Arabicus*, but firm evidence is lacking. One finds, then, a mixed population which enjoyed a degree of economic prosperity through the early years of the fifth century. This population was combined from sedentary Nabataean Arabs, Greek settlers of unknown origin, Greek-speaking army veterans, and the bedouin, whose outcasts must have been added to the citizens of the village. It is hardly certain, once again, that the Arab chieftains led by Milk who built the tomb in 419 dominated the life of the village itself, which probably had its own council, but they undoubtedly had an economic impact on the exchange of agricultural products for animal products. One must choose between the terms symbiosis and synoikism to describe this state of affairs.

The circumstances under which Salcha discarded the old cults becomes apparent from a small sample of Christian inscriptions. The earliest Christian inscription belongs, as has been seen, to March–September 497. It stands on a house lintel in tabula ansata and its letters, semicircular uncials, are more carefully cut than those on the fourth- and early fifth-century inscriptions. The owner of the structure was without doubt a successful soldier or imperial civil servant, for he bore the *praenomen* Flavius. His correct reporting of the year of the indiction and era of the province confirms this supposition. His *nomen*, abbreviated with the letters alpha-mu, was perhaps the Arabic Anamos (ἐκτίσθη τὰ ὧδε ἐπὶ Φλ(αβίου) Ἀν(αμου?)).[42] It is quite possible that Anamos left Salcha to join the army and returned to family lands upon his retirement. Alternatively, he may have purchased lands in the village, but as an Arab from other parts will have found the environs of the metropolis Bostra, one presumable site of his endeavors, pleasant enough. Anamos' case resembles that of Flavius Eusebius, who seems to have retired to Dar Qita on Djebel Barisha east of Antioch c. 344, as was seen in the preceding chapter. At any rate, the soldier or civil servant who took the *praenomen* Flavius, whether of expediency or conviction, often became a dedicated Christian as well. Hence the forbidding formulary on the house lintel from Psalm 117.20: "This is the gate of the Lord. The just shall enter within it." One wonders if Flavius Anamos considered the other residents of Salcha "just men" when he erected the house. If not, the village might still have been full of polytheists.

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[40] Littmann, PAES III A, 158. Waddington 2003.

[41] Waddington, 1999.

[42] Littmann, PAES III A, 161.

The second piece of evidence about the Christianization of Salcha consists in an enigmatic inscription mentioning a *periodeutēs* (+ Περιοδευτής +). If Waddington's transcription can be trusted, the text was cut in semicircular uncials similar to those on the Flavius Anamos lintel.[43] It is conceivable, in short, if the two inscriptions are contemporaneous, that Flavius Anamos relied on personal influence and asked the metropolitan of Bostra to send a *periodeutēs* to Salcha from time to time to minister to his own needs, and those of any other Christians. If so, this will have marked merely the beginning of Christianization at the village. This would put the real infusion of Christianity into Salcha in the sixth century. The village may be one of the places which finally accepted the new religion during the reign of emperor Justinian I (527–565) or later, as no epigraphic indications of its genuine popularity precede 601 A.D.[44] Of the undated Christian inscriptions at Salcha, one may be fifth- or sixth-century,[45] and the other is certainly sixth-century.[46]

The reasons for the seemingly slow progress of Christianity in Salcha become more apparent from an examination of the sites round about. Some four miles to the east-northeast lie the ruins of 'Ormān, which Enno Littmann identifies with the ancient Bosoa in his discussion of some inscriptions which he edited anew or which Waddington had missed.[47] Waddington, however, identified Bosoa with Awwas. The villages all lie in close proximity, and it is impossible to unravel these confusions without better maps and on the site inspection. This problem is complicated once again by the movement of stones from Awwas to 'Ormān and possibly other displacements.

The blunt reality is that not a shred of epigraphic evidence exists to prove that Bosoa ever accepted Christianity, but rather suggests the survival of the old cults well into the sixth century. Bosoa, like the other villages of the southeastern Hauran, had a mostly Nabataean Arab sedentary population which was superficially Hellenized. A familiar picture emerges from the epigraphy. The village of Bosoa (κώμη Βοσσηνῶν) had a council of caretakers (προνοηταί) which oversaw the construction and repair of buildings public and private.[48] The title of office also appears as "trustees" (πιστοί).[49] Retired soldiers settled at Bosoa as early as 295.[50] A certain Magnus, the grandson of the general (στρατηγός) Magnus commemorated on a funerary stele of 333 A.D. with no cross, doubtless belonged to such a family as well. Philip, father of Magnus the younger, has no stated rank, and probably never served in the army. The elder Magnus had probably retired to the village, with his son Philip later living off the lands bought from Magnus' doubtless modest fortune.[51] If the stele contains the quasi-Christian "here lies" (ἐνθάδε κῖτε, sic), it also has the characteristically pagan: "Courage! No one is immortal." (Θάρ(σ)ι οὐδὶς ἀθάνατος, sic) This family lay outside the cultural milieu of the local Nabataean stock. Priscus the veteran, who built a house in 323, was also one such, but the stones bearing his inscription allegedly came from the neighboring village of 'Uyūn.[52] An Arab house-builder also turns up.[53]

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[43] Waddington, 2011.

[44] Waddington, 1996. Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 329–334.

[45] Waddington, 2009.

[46] Waddington, 2010, with the omicron-upsilon and crosses having triangular tips.

[47] Cf., for example, Littmann, PAES III A, 685 (= Waddington 2043).

The village saw considerable building activity in the fourth century, most of the public structures being supervised by the board of caretakers or trustees. Among the structures were a wall and apses of 324,[54] two towers in 372,[55] but more significantly a number of temples, one of which formed the shrine of the Arab deity Theandrios or Theandrites, the "male-faced god" (ἀρρενωπὸν ὄντα θεόν) worshipped by the Nabataeans of Bostra and in the surrounding *territorium*, but about whom little evidence exists to reconstruct a typology except the authority of Damascius, who indicates in the *Life of Isidore* that Theandrites "breathed non-womanish life into souls" (καὶ τὸν ἄθηλυν βίον ἐμπνέοντα ταῖς ψυχαῖς).[56] Marinus of Neapolis, writing after 485, still refers to Theandrites as "another god much honored by the Arabs"

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[48] Waddington 2042–2044. Littmann, PAES III A, 696.
[49] Waddington 2045, 2046.
[50] Waddington 2041.
[51] Littmann, PAES III A, 695.
[52] Littmann, PAES III A, 697.
[53] Littmann, PAES III A, 685; Waddington, 2043.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Littmann, PAES III A, 689.
[56] Damascius, *V. Isidori*, Epit. Phot., 198 (Zintzen, 272).

(Θυανδρίτην ἄλλον᾽Αραβίοις πολυτίμητον θεόν).[57] Theandrites often bore the epithet "master", with the Semitic *rabb* rendered into Greek as ῾Ραββος, the exact synonym of κύριος.[58] A temple of this deity, called the Theondrition (Θεονδρίτιον = Θεανδριτεῖον) was constructed or repaired in 387, a surprisingly late date for such building activity, as the first Theodosian laws about pagan shrines had already come into force.[59] These regulations had little force, however, in the limitrophic districts like the eastern Hauran. The inscription reads:[60]

> By the provision and care of Valens son of 'Azīz, and Sobeos son of Avitus, and Magnus son of Abgar, and Manos son of Thiemos, [all] trustees, the Theondrition (sic) was built in the year 282 [of the era of Bostra]. (387 A.D.)

To judge from Marinus of Neapolis' observations, the cult of Theandrites, still virulent in 387, lingered for at least another century and probably well into the Justinianic period. The Arabic-Latinate mixture of names of the trustees suggests that army veterans and their descendants in particular adhered to this cult.

The earlier religious life of Bosoa emerges from other inscriptions. Half a century earlier, in 330, a basilica and gate were consecrated to an unknown deity or to some other sacred purpose, as a lintel inscription makes clear (ἀφιερώθη ἡ βασιλικὴ κὲ ἡ θύρα). A committee of four caretakers (προνοηταί) once again supervised the work.[61] The absence of crosses in the civil and funerary epigraphy of Bosoa-'Ormān-Awwas becomes readily comprehensible:[62] the village never accepted Christianity, a fact largely attributable to the religious solidarity of the caretakers or trustees with the old cults. The temple of another deity, this one also unknown, received refurbishment in 372 A.D. The inscription recording the work hints at the persistence of animal sacrifice at the village:[63]

> Provision for the dining hall and oxen stalls within, when the caretakers (or commissioners) were Nāṣir son of Hunain, and 'Azīz son of Mughaiyir, and Ma'n son of Tiyaim, and Silvanus son of Ḥuṭaim

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[57] Marinus, *V. Procli* 19 (Boissonade, 16).

[58] Sourdel, *Cultes du Hauran*, 78–81.

[59] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 2.

[60] Waddington, 2046 misreads the last letter of the date and gives it as 289 (era of Bostra) = 395 A.D., having mistaken the beta for a theta. Geffcken's failure to note this inscription in *Last Days of Greco-Roman Paganism* is puzzling.

[61] Littmann, PAES III A, 701. Waddington, 2044.

[62] Cf. Waddington, 2048–2052.

[63] Littmann, PAES III A, 696.

> [---] and also for the demolition and reconstruction of two towers in the temple sanctuary. In the year 267 (=372 A.D.)

Sacred meals thus occurred at a dining hall (τρίκλινος [οἶκος]) from animals kept in stalls inside the temenos (ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, sic).

This inscription provides evidence, therefore, of the continuity of pagan cult in 372 and 387. Since social and cultural formations necessarily persist beyond the limits or *termini* of the evidence, how long might the cults have survived at ʻOrmān? For once a sixth-century inscription provides the answer:[64]

> Zaidos, Klimos, and Mokeimos (Muqīm) of the tribe of the Konēnoi took care of the purification. In the year 412 (517 A.D.)

Littmann refers to the purification of the site, which was necessarily the temenos of some unknown god, in this wise: ". . . κάθαρσις denotes the formal cleansing of a temple, and accordingly in the present inscription it may refer to a ceremonial purification of a [pagan] sanctuary. Of course, if our reading of the date is correct, the sanctuary *must* have been a Christian church."[65] Pagan rituals of the annual purification of temples are well known.[66] A more reasonable course than Littmann's would be to take the inscription as hard evidence for continuity of cult at ʻOrmān until the time of emperor Justinian I, whose reign began in 527, for ample evidence attests the ongoing Christianization of the countryside in all parts of the empire.[67] If the act of purification (κάθαρσις) had been the Christian cleansing of a pagan temple, the apparatus of cross, victory formulae, and invocations of Christ and the martyrs which accompanied temple conversions, particularly in the sixth century, could hardly have been left out, but the inscription contains no Christian marking whatsoever.[68] To Littmann's mind the sixth century belongs to the "Christian" period of every site, but neither the literary evidence nor the epigraphic, in this instance, will bear the weight of that argument. One must also consider the fact that no Christian inscriptions have turned up at the site. The Arabs Zaidokimas and Mokeimos of the inscription of 517 differ from the other residents of ʻOrmān, for like the previously mentioned Milk of Salcha, they remained part of a clan and tribal structure, that of the Konēnoi, which may be the same as the Qanān.[69] They possibly came as newcomers to ʻOrmān, as pastoral residents living in symbiosis with the villagers and worshipping at one of their shrines. No firm answers exist to these questions, but it would certainly be erroneous to call ʻOrmān a Christian site in the sixth century. Nor did the Princeton expedition turn up any sign of an early Christian basilica at ʻOrmān or Awwas.[70]

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[64] Littmann, PAES III A, 694. Littmann's reading of the letters of the date as "412" (ἔτ(ει) υιβ΄) seems almost certain from his drawing of the stone. His conclusion is corroborated by a later examination of the stone. SEG 7, 1169. The series of dated inscriptions included in SEG 7 bears out the hypothesis worked out in the foregoing discussion that Christianity did not ascertainably reach ʻOrmān in the fourth century. SEG 7, 1170, 1171, 1172, 1177, 1178. The last of these commemorates the erection of an altar to the god Herakles in 320/1.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Infra, Ch. XI, n. 90.

[67] Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 329–34.

[68] In view of conditions at Philae in Upper Egypt, this conclusion is not improbable. Cf. supra, Ch. IX, Sect. 3 and 4.

Directly east of the ʻOrmān-Awwas complex of villages lie four other sites which seem not to have adhered to Christianity to any great extent until the fifth or sixth century, Medjel, Melaḥ iṣ-Ṣarrār, Burāq, and Deir in-Naṣrānī. Of these, the westernmost and nearest to Awwas is Medjel. Neither of the two dated inscriptions at Medjel bears a cross. The first, dated 430, mentions the reconstruction of a dining hall during the village directorship of a certain Eudaimon (ἐπὶ τοῦ πρ̣[ι]μηκηράτου Εὐδαίμονος ἀνανεώθη ὁ τρίκλινος).[71] The dining hall belonged to a house, unlike the example at Bosoa-ʻOrmān-Awwas, which served a pagan temple. The second inscription at Medjel, a lintel which stood over the door of a tomb and bearing a date c. 485, was assigned to several persons. The surface of the block, although broken, is legible in sufficient measure to cast doubt that it bore Christian symbols. One owner's name survives, Shaiʻ son of Garis, an Arab.[72] Next east of Medjal is Buraq. The persons named on its two building inscriptions with the dates 335 and 445 A.D. all have Arabic names. An official holding the office called the "primacy" (πρωτία (sic) for πρωτεία) supervised these works.[73] A house inscription with a type of cross often found beside fifth- and sixth-century inscriptions in the southern Hauran, that is with bifurcated tips, suggests that the village accepted Christianity sometime c. 425 or later.[74]

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[69] Littmann, PAES III A, 694.

[70] *Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904–5 and 1909, Division II: Architecture, Section A: Southern Syria*, ed. Howard C. Butler (Leiden 1919). This text is hereinafter cited as Butler, PAES II A.

[71] Littmann, PAES III A, 169.

[72] Littmann, PAES III A, 170.

[73] Littmann, PAES III A, 173, 174.

[74] Littmann, PAES III A, 175. The uncial alpha (ⲁ) is quite a late form in the epigraphy of the southern Hauran. An early dated example of the cross with split points (☩) turns up in 425 A.D. Littmann, PAES III A, 717.

The other two villages which lie directly east of ‘Ormān reveal signs of earlier Christianization. Melaḥ iṣ-Ṣarrār had at least some Christians in the fifth century, for an inscription of 425 mentioning the construction of a courtyard (αὐλή) by Axios and Salmān bears a cross with bifurcated tips.[75] Other inscriptions lie about whose dates can be inferred only from letter forms, two of them probably of fifth-century date,[76] and a victory inscription: "May the tyche of the Christians conquer" (+ Νίκαη ἐ τύχη τôν Χρ(ιστιανῶν)).[77] These texts must be seen, however, against others which suggest a mixed pagan-Christian community. The principal deity worshipped in Late Antiquity probably remained the god Dusares.[78] An ex-soldier or civil servant named Flavius Gorpos (from the Arabic Gurp or Gurf) built a house in the village in 466, but no signs of cult appear on the stone.[79] The local tombs indicate two sixth-century non-Christian burials, one of them sometime after 505 A.D.,[80] one of them on a completely preserved stone without any symbol of Christian cult. The easternmost site, called Deir in-Naṣrānī and resting on a high conical hill, was originally a pagan "high place" with a shrine or altar of some kind.[81] A lintel incorporated into the later Ghassanid monastery of the martyrs Sergius and Bacchus (sixth century) reflects the character of the place not so long before, having an identifiable personal name, a certain ‘Abd-Ba‘al (literally, "Slave of Ba‘al") who built the gate.[82] But nothing more certain emerges about the pre-Christian character of the buildings. It was evidently the monks who hacked three crosses upon this lintel when they despoiled the shrine and built their monastery. This probably occurred in the sixth century, when the cult of St. Sergius began to spread among the pro-Roman Arabs of the eastern frontier. The Christian God here went by the name of

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[75] Littmann, PAES III A, 717.

[76] Littmann, PAES III A, 707, 708.

[77] Littmann, PAES III A, 710.

[78] Littmann, PAES III A, 706 (164 A.D.). At Petra, at least, Dusares or Dūsharā was considered the god of the sun. His epithet Aarra can be rendered literally from the Arabic *agharru* as "the brightly shimmering one" (*der hell schimmernde*). But in E. Littmann's view, this word more probably comes from the Arabic *el-ghari*‘ī, "stone idol". Littmann, PAES IV A, 30. Dūsharā turns up in a Nabataean inscription of 76 A.D. at Umm is-Surab as "Dūsharā A‘arra, the god of our lord, who is in Bostra", that is, the god of the Nabataean king. Dedications to this deity also exist at Umm idj-Djimāl and Bostra. Littmann, PAES IV A, 2, 38, 69.

[79] Littmann, PAES III A, 714.

[80] Littmann, PAES III A, 712, 719.

[81] Butler, PAES II A, 334f.

[82] Littmann, PAES III A, 723.

"the God of Saints Sergius and Bacchus" (Ὦ Θεὼς τοῦ ἁγ[ί]ου Σεργ[ίου] κὲ Βάχου).[83]

Seven villages with dated inscriptions lie to the south of Salcha, the focal point of this analysis: Remmona (present-day Umm ir-Rummān), il-Meshqūq, Deir il-Meshqūq, Kfer, 'Anz, il-Ghāriyeh, and Mughdiyir. Little epigraphic evidence exists in any of these places to suggest Christianization. The ancient cult center of this group of villages lay at present-day Deir il-Meshqūq, where the ruins of a temple built in 124 A.D. survive. The building itself endured a series of conversions, first into a Christian church, then back into a temple during the reign of Julian the Apostate (361–363), then back again into a Christian church (late fourth century), and finally having monastic buildings added to it in the sixth century.[84] The local population had a weak disposition towards Christianity, if the sketchy epigraphic remains prove anything. Two methodological problems exist here, first, the fact that the Druz have moved many blocks from one village to another, and secondly that the bases for Butler's assertion that the temple was converted into a church before the time of Julian are not completely clear, as will be seen momentarily.[85] The sole dated fourth-century inscription from the site, belonging to 350/1 A.D., is related to official construction and thus indicates nothing about local religious attitudes.[86] The village of 'Anz contains a number of important inscriptions probably carted there from Meshqūq which refer to the refurbishment of the temple of an unknown god at the command of Julian. The first of these, on a lintel, is quite remarkable:[87]

> By the power of the emperor Flavius Claudius Julianus Augustus the holy places were raised again, and the temple was rebuilt and consecrated in the year 256 on the fifth day of [the month of] Dystros (= March 362 A.D.). (ἐπὶ κρατήσεως Φλ. Κλ. Ἰουλιανοῦ αὐτοκράτορος Αὐγούστου ἀνίθη τὰ ἱερὰ καὶ ἀνοικοδομήθη καὶ ἀφιερώθη ὁ ναός.)

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[83] Littmann, PAES III A, 722.

[84] Littmann's translation of the Nabataean Arabic temple dedication runs: "This is the fire-altar (?), which was made by Mughaiyir, son of 'Aqrab, [in] the house of 'Asad (?), the god, the god of Mu'in, in the year seven of Hadrian." Littmann puts forth the hypothesis that the divinity named in the inscription originated in South Arabia, and derived its name from a toponym there. The emperor Hadrian's seventh regnal year corresponds to 124 A.D. Littmann, PAES IV A, 27.

[85] Butler, PAES II A, 129f.

[86] Littmann, PAES III A, 177. Waddington 2053.

[87] Littmann, PAES III A, 186.

The second inscription indicates that a freedman of Julian named Ṣuraim (whose Roman name was perhaps Suraimus Julianus) erected an altar at el-Meshqûq (Σοραιμος ἀπελεύθ(ερος) Ἰουλιανοῦ ἐυσεβῶν ἀνέθηκε).[88] It seems probable that Ṣuraimus Julianus, as an Arab, retired to the place after a career in the service of Julian's household, as this particular offering has a private character and cannot be directly linked to the reconstruction of the temple. The temple itself had fallen into disuse, but Butler's argument that it became a Christian church provokes doubt because the evidence for pre-Julianic Christianity in this part of the southern Hauran is practically non-existent. It would be better to look for the cause amidst the general decline of the public cults in the fourth century which Johannes Geffcken notes,[89] but which no one has yet been able to explain without the dubious crutch of supposed or imagined Christianization. Priests at times had to resanctify rural temples which had been put to improper secular uses, as a third-century inscription from the village of Talmis on the upper Nile in Egypt demonstrates.[90]

The present-day village of Kfer, which shows no trace of a temple,[91] also contains probable epigraphic remnants from the temenos at il-Meshqūq, having an altar dedicated in 318 A.D. by a certain 'Abd son of Hieronymos and his wife Huṣn.[92] An altar also turned up at Kfer whose relief sculpture, perhaps of Julian, depicts an imperial figure wearing the veil of a Roman priest.[93] A gap of some forty-six years, not a long time, thus lies between the latest cultic inscription and that of Julian's freedman Ṣuraim, wherein no sure evidence of Christianity falls. Nor is there decisive evidence for much thereafter, as for example the funerary stele of one Shuyai‘ son of Sāfir (Σιηος Σαφερου), found at nearby ‘Anz, which lacks a cross and is dated to the year 415 A.D.[94] The undated so-called "church" at ‘Anz, constructed of very fine masonry, is not a very convincing ecclesiastical structure, having on its lintel merely the ambiguous "good fortune" and "moderation" (εὐτυχία σωφρ(ο)σ(ύνη)), both of them truisms in Stoic philosophy, inscribed within a central wreath and crosses in wreaths flanking it.[95] Whatever the significance of this building, it may in any case belong to a later, perhaps fifth-century, period of the site.

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[88] Littmann, PAES III A, 187.

[89] Johannes Geffcken, *Der Ausgang des griechisch-römischen Heidentums* (Heidelberg 1929), 90–103.

[90] Cited by W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia 1984), 311. The inscription (and not papyrus, as Frend has it) reads: "Aurelius Besarion, also called Ammonius, general of the Ombos nome at Elephantine, at the time when the most excellent Myron had succeeded to the high-priesthood, through whom he wrote to me commanding that all the pigs be expelled from the temple at the village of Talmis (πάντας τοὺς χοίρους ἐξελασθῆναι ἀπὸ ἱεροῦ κώμης Τάλμεως) at the twelfth *schoinos*, announces to all landowners that they shall expel those pigs from the said village within fifteen days, having before their eyes what was commanded about this [temple] in order to make it possible to perform the sacred worship in the accustomed manner" (πρὸς τὸ δύνασθαι τὰ περὶ τὰ ἱερὰ θρήσκια κατὰ τὰ νενομισμένα γείνεσθαι). W. Dittenberger assigns the inscription to the reign of C. Iulius Philippus (244–49). *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, ed. W. Dittenberger 1 (Leipzig 1903), no. 210. The temple had *not* fallen out of use, for the author of the decree was aware of certain customary acts of worship that had survived until the present day. (Cf. the use of the perfect participle, νενομισμένα.) This must have gone on all though the early third century. The walls of the temenos evidently served as a stockade for keeping the animals. This does not, of itself, prove the abandonment of the cult or any desecration of the temple. Nor need we suppose that Christianity had supplanted polytheism at Talmis.

[91] Butler, PAES II A, 131.

[92] Littmann, PAES III A, 179.

To the south of the villages of ‘Anz and Kfer, and farther removed from the temenos at il-Meshqūq, lies il-Ghāriyeh, which apparently did not accept Christianity before 380, this argument being based on a surviving lintel block that lacks a cross.[96] No traces of a church survive.[97] The village has yielded many undated pre-Christian funerary inscriptions on steles and other types of block which seem to date not later than the fourth century.[98] At any rate, the place eventually had a Christian community, for an IXΘYC inscription (sixth century?) is found on a lintel[99] and another lintel, dated 315 A.D., eventually had a cross inscribed in a circle neatly hacked over it.[100]

To the west of the cluster of villages around il-Meshqūq lay Remmona (present-day Umm er-Roummān). The site is entirely lacking in dated Christian inscriptions or other remains except "two small columns with capitals of late Christian design." Butler—whose words might be taken to mean sixth- or seventh-century—does not elaborate on this description,[101] but it falls in line with the epigraphic evidence, a sequence of three inscriptions of 364, 366, and 468 A.D., none of which suggest any trace of the Christian religion.[102] No need exists to suppose that the household of an army veteran of Arab stock, one Flavius Zuyaidat (?), son of Maʿauwil (?), with his wife Wā'ilat, need be a Christian as early as 366, the date of his lintel (Φλα(ούιος) Ζοεδαθος Μαυελου οὐ(τρ)α(ν)ὸς καὶ Ουαελαθε συνβίου αὐτοῦ . . .).[103] None of the building in the village took place under the sign of the cross, including what was probably a council house ([κοιν]οβούλιον) built in 468.[104] None of the local officials who performed the building work, including that of 468, have anything but Arabic names. A single "One God" (εἶς Θ(εός)) inscription appears, but, as it lacks the cross and other customary Christian symbols, its significance remains uncertain, nor is it dated.[105]

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[93] Butler, PAES II A, 131f.

[94] Littmann, PAES III A, 188.

[95] Littmann, PAES III A, 193. Butler, PAES II A, 132–34.

[96] Littmann, PAES III A, 197.

[97] Butler, PAES II A, 135f.

[98] Littmann, PAES III A, 199, 200, 202–204.

[99] Littmann, PAES III A, 201.

[100] Littmann, PAES III A, 198. Littmann refers to the cross as a disc, but Butler's drawing of the inscription clearly indicates a cross within the circle and the effacement of four letters.

[101] Butler, PAES II A, 132.

There is a single but important exception to the absence of Christianity in the parts around Remmona at a site called Deir il-Maiyās, but the date of the inscription is unfortunately illegible:[106]

> One God who helps. [X . . .] made a vow to God in behalf of his son Suleiman, and succeeded and erected this building from his own earnings in the year [---].
>
> By the forethought of Ḥunain, the housebuilder of the village of Bosoa, the courtyard was completed in thirty-six days. And the God helping you is one who knows everything. And strive lest you be envious, for envy . . . [---].

The inscription bears no cross, but the "One God who helps" inscriptions are invariably Christian. The father of Suleiman seems to have built a house with a courtyard, or even a large mausoleum, for his son sometime in the later fifth century. He hired a housebuilder from nearby Bosoa, a village that shows no signs whatever of having accepted Christianity even in the sixth century. Ḥunain, who signed his work in the second part of the inscription, was not a Christian, for he refers to the householder's God as "the God (or "god") helping you" (καί σοι ὁ [πᾶν] γιγνώ[σ]κων [β]οή[θ]ησος (sic) ὁ Θεός). As Ḥunain received payment for his work, he had to flatter the religious faith of the householder—although his words sound quite sincere. This was something of an exception in the parts around Remmona. Similarly, Ḥunain makes only an oblique reference to his own difference of belief. He was perhaps a worshipper of Theandrites in his native village of Bosoa, where this divinity's temple was refurbished in 387, and where that of a different deity was purified in 517, as we have seen. This is one of the very few instances extant of a pagan complimenting a Christian for the beneficence of his God. There is no *prima facie* reason to suppose that these words signified a readiness to convert to the new religion, although it is possible. The inscription bears out Libanius' implicit contention in his Oration 30 ("To the Emperor Theodosius on the Temples") that pagans and Christians living in the *territoria* of the Syrian and Arabian cities made no issue of their religious differences.[107] The resistance to Christianization was thus not invariably bitter, nor did it necessarily affect rural social and economic relations.

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[102] Littmann, PAES III A, 183 (= Waddington, 2055). See also Waddington, 2054 and 2056.

[103] Littmann, PAES III A, 183 (= Waddington, 2055).

[104] Waddington, 2056. The inscription had apparently disappeared by the time of the Princeton Expeditions, as Littmann omits it.

[105] Waddington, 2057.

[106] Waddington, 2053b.

The Christianization of the villages around il-Meshqūq may have been protracted until the early sixth century, around the time when the Justinian initiated a program of converting isolated pagan villages. One of the few dated Christian inscriptions turns up at Ṣammeh or Sammet el-Berdan, a site at which at least one, but probably many more, ethnically Arab veterans settled, as for example Rufus son of 'Ath ('Ροῦφε ῎Αθου). A Christian inscription belonging to a tomb indicates the existence of a presbyter in 534, an Arab named Aus son of John. One may take it that a regular ecclesiastical structure, with a church and a few regular clergy, had finally come into existence in the vicinity of il-Meshqūq. It is conceivable that the metropolitan at Bostra sent out regular personnel and building materials in response to the demand for the conversion of villages that came with the law on Hellenism of 529 and the subsequent issuance of the Codex Justinianus.[108]

An exception to the general tendency of late Christianization on the eastern Hauran plain is found at Motha or Mothana, which lies directly to the east of the villages clustered round the temenos at il-Meshquq, but the explanation lies in the importation of a small number of army officers, for a cavalry vexillation whose official name was the *Equites Scutarii Illyriciani* had its billet nearby.[109] In the Constantinian epoch Mothana was itself incorporated as a city (πόλις) with a town council of landed magnates (βουλευταί).[110]

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[107] Supra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 1.

[108] Waddington, 2039, 2040. Cf. supra, Ch. I, Sect. 6.

[109] Waddington, 2037 and notes. Cf. *Notitia Dignitatum Orientalis* 37.14, ed. O. Seeck (Berlin 1876).

[110] Waddington, 2034.

The archaeological remains are, however, distinctly disappointing.[111] The public cults had retained their strength at Mothana even in the mid-fourth century despite the influence of a few Christian army officers, as two inscriptions reveal:[112]

> By the religiously pure provision of master . . . Flavius Hierocles [the governor of Syria], when Lichnos was city councillor [and] advocate, and Rawai and Aedos and 'Aus were trustees, the embankment was cleansed and the sacred thoroughfare was built, and the city was built for the good.

A second inscription observes:[113]

> On behalf of the safety and victory of our emperors Constantius and Constans Augusti, the sacred thoroughfare was ornamented on a sacred day, in the year 238 (= 343/4 A.D.).

Many Latins dwelt in Mothana, most of them, it appears, imported for garrison duty. Among them was a woman from Gaul:[114]

> Stercoria, a Gallic woman from the city of Ratomagus, lies here, aged forty years. Being bereaved of her, Flavius Gessikas, her former husband, as you see, completed this memorial from the foundations to the top from his own funds, having spent 10,500 *denarii*, in the year 237 (= 342/3 A.D.).

It is conceivable that this woman was a Christian ("here lies"), but her husband was apparently not. The inscription bears no cross. This brings no surprise, as the rural army recruiting grounds of Gaul had hardly seen Christianity by this time.[115] Flavius Gessikas' rank is unknown, but he must have been a senior officer to judge from his wife's age and his access to specie. Another officer of the *Equites Scutarii Illyriciani* was a Christian, and the funerary inscription erected in his honor stands in sharp contrast to the previous one:[116]

> (Cross) Lucius Ursus, *actuarius* of the Mothana vexillation, built the memorial from its foundations in the year 245 (= 350/1 A.D.) on 23 June. Here lies Ursus the *biarchos*, father of Ursus the subordinate

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[111] Butler, PAES II A, 143.

[112] Waddington, 2034.

[113] Waddington, 2035.

[114] Waddington, 2036.

[115] Gregory of Tours implies rather strongly that the Christianization of inner Gaul (apart from the riverine city of Lugdunum) began only in the late fourth century. For example, the *territorium* of Tours underwent initial Christianization only during the episcopate of St. Martin. See: C.E. Stancliffe, "From Town to Country: The Christianisation of the Touraine 370–600," *The Church in Town and Countryside*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford 1979), 43–59.

[116] Waddington, 2037.

> [officer], through the supervision of Titus Claudius Auxitus. A house of repose for a dead man. Chaiām the house builder. I, Ursus, spent 11,000 *denarii* Syro- (?) out of my own efforts.

Some controversy exists about the readings of words in this inscription, but those pertaining to cult are clear. A Christian formula accompanies the Christian symbol of the cross, namely the formula "a house of repose for a dead man" (οἰκεία τῆς ἀναπαύση[ω]ς οἰ[χ]ομένῳ). These traits remove all ambiguity about the cult of the family, and provide a useful contrast to the other synchronous non-Christian inscriptions of the Hauran. The expression of Christian cult was in the mid-fourth century an important consideration for newcomers such as military families from Gaul or Illyricum, who took exception to the milieu of the old cults. The stonecutter, Chaiām (Χαίαμ[ο]ς), was a local Arab. Unless Christian army veterans remained in the Hauran after their retirement, such immigrants had a negligible influence on the religious evolution of the countryside.

Nearby il-Kahf ("the cave"), a fortified army camp, whose ancient Latin name Spelunca survives in the present-day Arabic toponym, housed another cavalry formation, the *Equites promoti indigenae*,[117] but unlike Mothana the place was not, so far as we know, incorporated as a city. As a result, long-extant civic-religious cults, if any existed, had less impact on local life. The troops, as *indigenae* ("locals"), must have been mostly Arabs when the formation was originally organized, and recruits will have necessarily come from the surrounding district thereafter as well. The fortress dates from 306,[118] but received reinforcements in the time of the emperors Valens and Valentinian I (c. 367–375 A.D.).[119] At some point a cistern (λάκκος) and aqueduct (ἀγωγός) were built.[120] Butler dates the construction of the single-aisled, apsed basilica inside il-Kahf to the time of Valens' improvements in the fortifications.[121] Some Christian officers, like Ursus the *actuarius* at neighboring Mothana, will have used the chapel, but no evidence suggests that the locally enlisted cavalrymen were subjected to compulsion to become Christian. The church itself stands on part of a temple which Butler thinks served the cult of the emperors at the time the fortress was built in 306.[122] The church in any case lacks a donor's inscriptions, and so the date of 367–375 for its foundation cannot be argued decisively from the architecture alone. El-Kahf remained in any case an enclave without great impact on the religiosity of the district, unless veterans who had accepted Christianity settled in the vicinity, a moot point. A Chi-Rho cross of indeterminate date was incised on a pagan funerary inscription built into the arch at the fortress gate, paritally obliterating the foundation inscription.[123]

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[117] *Notitia Dignitatum Orientalis* 37.18.
[118] Littmann, PAES III A, 228.
[119] Littmann, PAES III A, 229.
[120] Littmann, PAES III A, 230.
[121] Butler, PAES II A, 145–47.
[122] Butler, PAES II A, 147.

It is quite evident that there were limits to the success of the archbishops of Bostra in Christianizing the countryside. It was a fairly easy task in the Bostrene, and the advance of the new religion there is rather consistent with with its progress in the Apamene, where the most accessible villages were converted in the late fourth century. *Periodeutai* figure in this process in the Bostrene, as elsewhere. When one gets to the Hauran plain east of Salcha, however, the picture begins to change. There are Christians in some villages like Melaḥ iṣ-Ṣarrar by 425, but at Bosoa none appear at all. The complex of villages around Remmona and il-Meshqūq shows little religious change except for isolated householders. Christianity often appears in unusual and anomalous ways: in a very early *martyrion* and monastic community in 354 A.D.,[123a] and among the army officers at Mothana. These men were doubtless loath to impose their religious opinions on their locally recruited troops.

II. Djebel Hauran

It is axiomatic that considerable cultural differentiation exists between plains and highland societies in the Mediterranean lands. Djebel Hauran, lying hard against the flatlands of the Hauran, offers a unique opportunity to test this hypothesis with archaeological, and particularly epigraphic, data in the twin areas of the survival of pagan cult and Christianization. In this respect the Djebel has more in common with the eastern Hauran, with its slow pace of conversion in the Arab villages grouped around temples than with the suburban district around Bostra. H.C. Butler offers a dramatic description of the geology and topography of the Djebel Hauran:[124]

> The Djebel, or mountain, of the Ḥauran is a cluster of volcanic hills grouped about a number of extinct craters, one of which—il-Ḳuleb—raises its pointed crest, about 1000 m. high, well above the

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[123] Littmann, PAES III A, 231.
[123a] Cf. infra, n. 148.
[124] Butler, PAES II A, 297.

> rest. The region is difficult to traverse, its narrow fertile valleys of deep red soil being separated by mighty streams of broken lava and wild wastes strewn with volcanic bowlders and scoriae. The only rock visible in this rocky and stony region is black basalt. The country is well watered and has always been productive. Like other volcanic lands, it is excellently well adapted to the growing of the vine. In ancient times it was full of small cities and little towns, the inhabitants of which appear to have been wealthy. For several centuries it seems to have been practically deserted; but today every ruin, with one or two exceptions, is occupied by a community of Druses. . . . Their presence however has been a serious menace to the old buildings, for, being great builders themselves in a crude sort of way, they have preyed upon the ancient architecture for building-stones until many of the buildings . . . have entirely disappeared. . . .

The prosperity of the towns and villages of Djebel Hauran lay in the production of a cash crop of wine, which yielded enough profit to purchase grain and at the same time to hire stonemasons in order to construct many impressive buildings, including some fine temples.

The town dwellers of Djebel Hauran were Nabataeans bilingual in Arabic and Greek. Their cults until the epoch of Christianization remained directed to the typical Semitic deities of the province of Arabia. The remnants of temples abound not only in the towns, but also in isolated "high places" beneath mountain peaks. Ironically, these sacred places invariably lie at sites whose Christianization, through the lack of dated inscriptions, cannot be traced with any certainty. Of these sites the earliest and most impressive by far is the ancient Seeia (present-day Šī'), which houses the temple of the Nabataean sun-god Baal Shamin, constructed in 33/2 B.C.,[125] another dedicated to Dūsharā (the Dusares of the Greek inscriptions),[126] and yet another of an unknown deity.[127] Among the remains which have survived is the bust of the unbearded and faintly smiling Baal-Shamin, the Lord of Heaven, with head radiate.[128] The anthropomorphism and smiling humanity of the Nabataean pantheon emerges from other examples of sculpture.[129]

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[125] Butler, PAES II A, 374ff. The foundation inscription reads: "In pious remembrance of Malikat, the son of 'Aus, the son of Mughaiyir, who built for Ba'al-Shamīn the inner temple and the outer temple and this portico and its covering. . . . May those who still live be in peace." Littmann, PAES IV A, 100. The prayer for "peace" corresponds to a similar motif found in the Safaitic inscriptions. Supra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 3 passim.

[126] Butler, PAES II A, 385–90.

[127] Butler, PAES II A, 393f.

[128] Butler, PAES II A, 384, and Fragment G, Illustrations 331, 332, 333.

[129] Butler, PAES II A, Fragment M, Illustration 334.

A bilingual Nabataean inscription refers to "Seeia standing in the land of Hauran" (Σεεια κατὰ γῆν Αυρανειτιν ἑστηκυῖα). The inscription adds in Nabataean Arabic: "This is the image of She'i'."[130] The name She'i' apparently doubled as the name of the town and of the locally worshipped female deity as well.[131] The inscription was cut on a pedestal atop which stood the personification of Seeia, and gives perfect expression to the sense of religious awe associated with pagan "high places."

Another site of importance was Canatha (present-day Qanawāt), a large city with extensive epigraphic remains, but practically without a dated inscription.[132] Canatha was an ancient member of the Transjordanian Decapolis.[133] The place has a Zeus temple built in a basilica style thought closely related to the earliest Syrian Christian basilicas.[134] The temenos of an unknown deity also stands at Deir Smedj, a spot not far from Canatha.[135] Another temple exists at Athela (present-day 'Atil), where the Nabataean god Theandrites received worship.[136] An inscription here of the third century A.D. refers to the deity as the "god Wasеath, the ancestral Theandrios" (θεῷ Οὐ[α]σεάθου πατρῴῳ Θεανδρίῳ).[137] As was mentioned in the previous section, the temple of Theandrites located at the present-day site of 'Ormân was rebuilt at the late date of 387 A.D. One can hardly doubt that the cult retained a similar strength and longevity in the uplands of Djebel Hauran as well. Other temple sites include Selaima (present-day Slem),[138] Philippopolis (present-day Shehbā), which contains a temple-like structure that H.C. Butler refers to as the Philippeion,[139] Aere (present-day iṣ-Ṣanamēn), which has a Tychaion,[140] and Ḥebrān,[141] where a deity called Lykourgos was venerated in the second century A.D.[142] The site of Maiyamas provides the unique example of two temples of unknown gods which were converted into a single church by connecting them with walls and then roofing over the intervening space.[143] The evidence for the conversion of temple buildings into churches is exceptionally rare in the Hauran. The eventual disposition of these sites is difficult to trace as well because of the lack of dated local Christian inscriptions. The Christian population seems, in general, to have taken root at sites distant from the great temples, with the exception of the community at Canatha, which as an important city had a more cosmopolitan character than the villages. It is unfortunately impossible to trace from the epigraphy how long the temples remained in use on Djebel Hauran, there being little evidence of construction beyond the early third century A.D., as for example at Athela. The known survival of the cult of Theandrites elsewhere in the Hauran suggests, however, that some pagan communities retained their identities until the end of the fourth century and beyond.

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[130] Littmann, PAES III A, 103. Literally, She'i' means "levelled square", corresponding to the Greek ἡ ἱερὰ πλατεία. Littmann, PAES IV A, 103.

[131] Littmann, PAES III A, 103.

[132] There is an undated dedicatory inscription to the god Theandrios the "master" ([θεῷ] Θεανδρίῳ Ραββ[---]). Littmann, PAES III A, 763. It is unclear if it is related to the temple cited infra, Ch. XI, n. 134. The letters of the inscription are in relief, a feature suggestive of a relatively late date.

[133] Butler, PAES II A, 346.

[134] Butler, PAES II A, 347–50. The plan given by Butler (Illustration 315) is emphatic on this point.

[135] Butler, PAES II A, 352–54.

[136] Butler, PAES II A, 355f.

[137] Waddington, 2374a.

[138] Butler, PAES II A, 356–59.

[139] Butler, PAES II A, 359f.

[140] Butler, PAES II, 316–20.

[141] Butler, PAES II A, 323–25.

[142] Littmann, PAES III A, 663.

When one considers the religious transformation of the villages which became Christianized, he should bear in mind that these were the more "progressive" local societies, and that others which have left no secure epigraphic record may well have kept to the old cults longer, in some instances as late as the sixth century. One such place may have been Djebel il-Qulēb near Kapra on the western rim of Djebel Hauran. The ruins of a temenos lie some 400 feet below the summit of the mountain.[144] A very fragmentary funerary inscription found near the west wall of the temple dates from 520 A.D. Despite a seemingly Christian key word assigned to it by its editor Enno Littmann, the inscription is not convincingly Christian:[145]

> . . .of [---]ia Charis, his wife, who fell asleep (?). Aenius Mo[---], at his own expense, built (?) the tomb iṇ the year 415 (= 520 A.D.).

The expression "fell asleep" has no basis except the editor's flimsily hypothetical reconstruction of the text ([---]ιας Χάριτος γυ[ναικὸς κοιμηθεί]σ̣ης) which, if plausible, carries no decisive weight. The tomb is called a "place" (τόπος), not a common term in Christian funerary nomenclature. The stone has itself suffered damage around the edges, leaving the existence of a cross a moot question. Djebel il-Qulēb was, at any rate, a pagan "high place" overlooking the Hauran plain, where the survival of cult, or at any rate the existence of an un-Christianized population in the sixth century, finds indirect confirmation through the inscription. Similar conditions may have affected other temple sites.

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[143] Butler, PAES II A, 326–29.

[144] Butler, PAES II A, 336. Waddington 2095a (p. 526).

[145] Littmann, PAES III A, 731.

It is necessary, for the sake of comprehensibility, to run the survey of the towns of Djebel Hauran from north to south. The first group of sites lies on the northern spurs of Djebel Hauran, and includes Eitha (present-day El-Hīt), el-Haiyāt, 'Amra, Sakkaia (present-day Shaqqa), Khirbet el-'Arādji, and one last site not on the maps called Btheine, which seems to have lain near Eitha.

The first signs of Christianization emerge in this cluster of villages c. 354 A.D. at Caesarea Eitha, a large village with urban status,[146] which lies on a high eminence, with the foundation of a martyrion dedicated to St. Sergius, a victim of the Great Persecution (303–313) (ἱερὸν Σέργιν).[147] The founders were Eulogius the presbyter and archimandrite, Doreus the presbyter, and Elias the deacon.[148] Contrary to Waddington's view that regular clergy existed in the town, it seems more probable that the martyrion was a monastic establishment, and that the presbyter and deacon named after the archimandrite were simply his subordinates, for monks often, like the aforementioned Eulogius, had received clerical orders.[149] Furthermore, the establishment of an isolated martyrion often came as the first step in the Christianization of a site. The inscription represents, in any case, one of the earliest *martyria* on record.[150] There are, unfortunately, no other relevant dated inscriptions at the site. It therefore becomes difficult to trace the inroads of Christianity against the local deities, two of which went by the names Zeus Megistos and Zeus Ganymede.[151] Another god, whose name has fallen off the inscription, apparently received sacrifices at the time of the "sacred moon" (κατὰ σελήνην ἱεράν, [θύειν . . .] ησιος ἐκέλευσεν).[152] The same monks apparently cleansed another small temple at Eitha, for it bears the inscription of St. George in rude Greek (ἅγιος Γαιόργις) and was written in a script similar to that used on the martyrion of St. Sergius erected by the monks in 354.[153] The monks perhaps installed the relics of St. George in the local temple.

The folk who resided in Caesarea Eitha consisted of veteran army officers, a group often intractably resistant to Christianization in the Hauran plain even under the late empire.[154] For example, one finds the funerary inscription of a *ducenarius* or mid-level officer on the staff of the *dux* (commander of the cavalry formations) of the province, probably belonging to the fourth century.[155] The man had evidently retired to Eitha because of his own Arabic ancestry, for his own name was Philip—a popular name among the locals because of the splendid, if brief, career of the emperor Philip the Arab (244–249)—and Suleiman that of his son. Philip the *ducenarius* had done well, for his funerary monument, built on a considerable scale, had a courtyard (μνῆμα σὺν αὐλῇ). Only one Christian building inscription has turned up at Eitha, but the date and function of the structure are indeterminate.[156] The eventual course of the religious transformation at Caesarea Eitha cannot be told, but the construction of a martyrion and possible conversion of a temple into a second martyr shrine suggest the capitulation of the local population to the new religion by the 360's or 370's.

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[146] The citizenry are called δῆμος Ἐειθηνῶν Καισαρήων. Waddington, 2113.
[147] Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 71–73.
[148] Waddington, 2124.
[149] Cf. Waddington's note (p. 449f.) about a *diakonos archimandritēs*.
[150] Waddington, 2124.
[151] Waddington, 2116 and 2118.
[152] Waddington, 2119.
[153] Waddington, 2126.

The most important ecclesiastical center on the northern rim of Djebel Hauran was ancient Sakkaia Maximianopolis (Σακκαία, present-day Shaqqa), an important town which not only ranked as a *polis* but even computed local dates by its own era.[157] The exact starting point of the local era is now known, beginning in 286 with the acclamation of Maximian Herculius as Caesar.[158] At any rate, Zeus Megistos, the local deity, had a temple in Sakkaia,[159] and various pagan funerary inscriptions with rounded uncials have turned up.[160] Even a small city like Sakkaia on the edge of Djebel Hauran might enjoy a degree of Hellenic cultural life. Towards the end of the fifth century a memorial epigram to Proclus the Neoplatonist philosopher of Athens (ob. 485) is found among the inscriptions. A literate and wealthy Sakkaian had evidently read some of his works:[161]

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[154] Waddington, 2120 and 2121.

[155] Waddington, 2122. I have conjectured a fourth-century date based on the letter forms given in Waddington's transcription. On *ducenarii*, see Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 599 and 634.

[156] Waddington, 2125.

[157] Butler, PAES II A, 360.

[158] J. Koder and M. Restle, "Die Ära von Sakkaia (Maximianupolis) in Arabia," *JOB* 42 (1992), 79–81.

[159] Waddington, 2140.

[160] Waddington, 2144–2151, 2153, 2153a.

[161] Prentice, AAES III, 375.

> Proklos, most glorious sophist to all Greece,
> There leaving life receives this marker,
> As it was destined in renowed Athens
> That his soul take flight from an Attic mouth.

Sakkaia began to develop a large Christian population, it appears, only in the fifth or sixth century.[161a] The earliest mention of a church comes in an inscription dated to the year 310 in the provincial era or 596 A.D., a private donation, the martyrion of St. Theodore, erected by a certain Elias, son of the deacon Kassiseos "for the public use of the city in behalf of the forgiveness of his own sins" (+ Ἠλίας . . . ἐξ ἰδίων ἔκτισεν τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ ἁγίου Θεοδώρου τῷ κοινῷ τῆς πόλεως ὑπὲρ ἀφήσεως ἁμαρτιῶν).[162] Two other Christian inscriptions belong in the sixth century.[163] One of these texts mentions the construction of a martyrion of St. George and other martyrs by the local bishop Tiberinus with the aid of two of his deacons in 549 A.D.[164] The emperor Justinian I (527–565) is known often to have used the bishops of small cities in order to further his own administrative aims.[165] The other sixth-century Christian inscription identifies a certain city counsellor (πρoτ(εύων)) who erected a stable in 586 A.D.[166]

For Sakkaia, at least, no evidence exists to suggest thoroughgoing Christianization before the fifth century. At the other sites along the northern rim of Djebel Hauran, a sixth-century date synchronous with the Justinianic program may be in order. There is, for example, el-Haiyat, on an isolated eminence near Caesarea Eitha.[167] El-Haiyât had temple monies for building purposes (ἐκ τῶν ἱερατικῶν).[168] The early inscriptions attest Semitic deities in their Greek cognate forms such as Zeus Ganymede and Aphrodite, but also the Hellenic Nike.[169] The cults of el-Haiyat persisted until at least c. 500, for a badly garbled inscription with late letter forms mentions the offering (ἀνάθεμα) of a certain Thaimos.[170] The earliest Christian inscriptions belong to 578 A.D. and are found on a large ancient house. They were, however, erected by outsiders, a certain Flavius Seos and his son Olbanos. Flavius Seos was the agent or administrator (ἐπίτροπος) of al-Mundhir, who held the Roman title of patrician while serving as phylarch of the Ghassanid Arab allies of the empire.[171] It brings no surprise that the indigenous population of a village like el-Haiyat should remain pagan c. 500, for Sakkaia had no attested bishop until the mid-fifth century. Nor are there traces of any church buildings at el-Haiyāt.

[161a] The Christian Bassos son Abourios is attested in 357. Waddington, 2145. Cf. L. Robert, *Hellenica* 11–12 (1960), 306–19. A bishop is first attested in 451. Infra, Sect. 4.

[162] Waddington, 2159.

[163] This is because of the omicron-upsilon ligature.

[164] Waddington, 2158. The existence of the omicron-upsilon ligature refutes Butler's late 4th c. date. *Early Churches*, 22.

[165] But one must be cautious in making such judgements. A.H.M. Jones, citing the ecclesiatical history of Sozomen (5th c.) observes: "In the province of Arabia, where the village was the normal unit of government, villages bishoprics were common." *Later Roman Empire*, 877 (from Sozomen, HE 7.19).

[166] Prentice, AAES III, 377.

[167] Butler, PAES II A, 362f.

[168] Waddington, 2095.

[169] Waddington, 2097–2099.

[170] Waddington, 2100. Once again the omicron-upsilon ligature prevails.

Nor was another site, 'Amra, demonstrably Christian before the late fifth century. Here the Semitic deity Allāt received worship as a thinly disguised Athena (295 A.D.).[172] A retired army veteran named Silvanus built a tomb for himself and his children sometime c. 400 A.D. without adding a cross, and was probably a pagan (Σιλουνὸς οὐετρανὸς εὐτυχῶς ζήσας).[173] The first dated Christian inscription falls in 473 and reads: "Remember, Lord, the builder, whose name [only] you know."[174] Three other dated examples fall in the sixth century.[175] From no later than 550 onward, 'Amra had two presbyters who accomplished various building projects.[176] The village thus becomes certifiably Christian from the epigraphic standpoint only during the Justinianic period.

There is, finally, ancient Philippopolis (present-day Shehbā'), which acquired urban status and its name during the reign of Philip the Arab (244–249), who honored the place with the honorific title of *colonia*. It fell from importance thereafter.[177] Philippopolis had a temple-like structure usually referred to as the Philippeion, a site reserved for the imperial cult.[178] The earliest Christian inscription in the town belongs to 552, when the bishop Basilius built a church.[179] The city had acquired its first bishop no later than the Council of Chalcedon in 451, a date consistent with trends elsewhere in Djebel Hauran.[180]

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[171] Waddington, 2110, 2111.

[172] Waddington, 2081. This inscription uses the Arabic word for "year" (*sanat*) in Greek transliteration, viz. σεννότου.

[173] Waddington, 2085. I reason the date from the squared uncials (common in northern Syria c. 380–420, but again later in the 6th c.), and from the personal name Silounos. Yet some 6th c. examples of Latinate names turn up in the Ledjā. Infra, Ch. XI, Sect. 3. A 6th c. date may therefore be in order.

[174] Waddington, 2087.

[175] Waddington, 2088–2090.

[176] Waddington, 2089–2090.

[177] See discussion in Waddington 2072. Cf. Butler, PAES II A, 359f., and idem, *Publications of an American Archaeological Expedition to Syria in 1899–1900, Part II: Architecture and Other Arts*, ed. Howard C. Butler (New York 1903), 376–396. The latter is hereinafter cited as Butler, AAES II.

[178] Prentice, AAES III, 396–399.

[179] Prentice, AAES III, 403.

Two other sites which have a pre-Justinianic date of Christianization require brief mention, Khirbet el-ʻArādji and Btheine. At Khirbet el-ʻArādji, which lies on a northeastern spur of Djebel Hauran, the local Baal went by the Hellenized name of Zeus Keraunios ("the Thunderer"); the nomadic Arab chieftain and commander Adrian (Ἀδριανοῦ . . . ἐθνάρχου στρατηγοῦ νομάδων) had his tomb erected there during the Roman imperial period (2nd or 3rd c. A.D.).[181] The first Christian inscription appears in 397, the second in 553.[182] Btheine, a ruin consisting of twenty or so houses and two large towers in Waddington's day, had a Tycheion (τὸ τυχῖον) erected by the common funds of the village under the direction of its village council or board of trustees (πιστοί).[183] The place contains no dated inscriptions, but in the interior of a small church a single Christian inscription exists which belongs roughly to the period 375–500 A.D.[184]

The towns and villages on the northern spurs of Djebel Hauran thus began gradually to accept Christianity in the mid-fourth century, but the progress remained uneven. Even with the presence of a bishop at Sakkaia, some sites appear to have acquired the institutional presence of the new religion only in the sixth century. One might expect a slower rate of conversion in the interior of Djebel Hauran, what with the proximity of the Nabataean temples and their ancestral cults, along with the limited accessibility of the district to the outside world. Let us therefore consider the epigraphy of the central region in order to discover what differences, if any, accompanied the process of Christianization.

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[180] Neither Michael Lequien, *Oriens Christianus* 3 (Paris 1740) nor Harnack, *Mission and Expansion of Christianity* 2, 153–58 found evidence of a 3rd c. see. Nor does Irfan Shahid cite any proof that Philippopolis (present-day Shahbā') had a bishop or was Christianized in the third century. *Rome and the Arabs* (Washington, D.C. 1984), 37, 149f. Nor are there texts proving the widespread Christianization of rural Arabia at such an early date. Ibid. 154–56. The bishops of the Hauran can be found conveniently in the chronological tables in: Rudolf E. Brünnow and Alfred von Domaszewski, *Die Provincia Arabia* 3 (Strasbourg 1909), 325ff. Philippopolis was only the third see to be established in Djebel Hauran (345f.). The first of these, Dionysias-Soada, is attested as an episcopal see only at the Second Oecumenical Council at Constantinople in 381 (341). Canatha (present-day el-Qanawāt) turns up with a bishop in 449 (p. 345). For fuller discussion, see infra, Ch. XI, Sect. 4.

[181] Waddington, 2195, 2196.

[182] Waddington, 2197, 2198.

[183] Waddington, 2127. I have been unable to find a map reference for this site.

[184] Waddington, 2134 (rounded uncials). Butler, *Early Churches* makes no mention of this site.

The central Djebel Hauran contains most of the ancient cult centers mentioned at the beginning of this section. A scattering of inscriptions reflects the character of the pre-Christian religiosity there. At Canatha stands an offering to the god Theandrites, who bears the epithet of Rabb or Master ([θεῷ] Θεανδ̣ρίῳ Ραββ [---]).[185] Another inscription at il-Mef'aleh mentions a celebration of the festival of an unnamed god on the eleventh day of Loos, our own August (ἡ ἑορτὴ τῶν Σοαδηνῶν τῷ θεῷ Λῴου ι̣(α)´).[186] Enno Littmann reckons the latter to represent the cult of the tribe of Su'ād, who founded or occupied the town of Soada on the western rim of Djebel Hauran.[187] There is little reason to doubt, from the epigraphy, that these and the other traditional cults, such as that of Baal-Shamin at the great temenos at Šî' did not persist well into the sixth century. Let us consider first the western rim of Djebel Hauran.

Soada, later known as Dionysias (present-day Suwēdā), was one of the earliest Nabataean settlements and an important site for the worship of Dūsharā. The place had an arched gate, theatre, nymphaeum, basilica, and other urban structures of post-Nabataean date, and lies on the Roman military road between Bostra and Canatha.[188] Soada-Dionysias had a large pre-Christian pantheon, to judge from the inscriptions, among them Azizos, a deity belonging to a Semitic triad along with Baal-Shamin and Mun'im, all of whom doubled, supposedly, as the Hellenic Ares, Helios, and Hermes.[189] The sun god received the appellation of "Lord" (κύριε = *rabb*) on one temple.[190] There was also a cult of the "Invincible Dūsharā ([--- ἱερεὺς Δο]υσάρεος θε[οῦ---] ἀνικήτου).[191] Waddington even speculates on the existence of devotees to Zeus Ammon.[192]

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[185] Littmann, PAES III A, 763. The letters are cut in relief rather than incised, a phenomenon characteristic of some Nabataean inscriptions. On the archaeological remains of the site, see supra, Ch. XI, nn. 132–34. Cf. Butler, *Early Churches*, 24 (temple conversion).

[186] Littmann, PAES III A, 765¹. The letters are in relief. See previous note. Cf. Sourdel, *Cultes du Hauran*, 110f.

[187] Littmann, PAES III A, 765¹.

[188] Butler, PAES II A, 355.

[189] Waddington, 2314. Cf. J.B. Segal, *Edessa* (Oxford: 1970) 106. Cf. H.J.W. Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa* (Leiden 1980), 147ff., whose remarks seem to reject the formal existence of a "triad".

[190] Waddington, 2315.

[191] Waddington, 2312.

[192] Waddington, 2313. The ambiguous word or phrase *AMMŌNIKA*, which the editor transcribes as Ἄμμων νικᾷ, has a parallel in Waddington, 2382 (Ἄμμων ζήτω). Cf. Sourdel, *Cultes du Hauran* 89–92. One can perhaps identify the Syrian

Soada-Dionysias is known to have had a bishop at the time of the Council of Nicaea in 325, but there is no reason to suppose that the population of the city was any more Christianized than Bostra in the time of Julian the Apostate (361–363), when the population of the latter place had a roughly even distribution of pagans and Christians.[193] The Christian inscriptions of Soada have no dates, but appear to belong to the late fourth and fifth centuries on the basis of letter forms.[194] The first stands on a house: "The hospice (ὁ ξενεών) of St. Theodore was built by the most holy bishop Peter."[195] The inscription reflects more about the pilgrim traffic moving along the highway between the Holy Places in Palestine and Osrhoene-Mesopotamia than local religious conditions. Nor was this Peter necessarily the bishop of Soada. The hospice was perhaps erected by bishop Peter of Maximianopolis, that is Sakkaia, whose tomb lies in nearby Canatha and whose interest in the Holy Places may have caused him to endow a hospice on the main road. The construction of the hospice belongs decisively in the sixth century.[196] Nor does a contribution to the building by Megistos, an imperial count, add anything to our knowledge of the local religious demography (+'Εκ προσφορᾶς Μεγίστου ἐνδοξ(οτάτου) κό(μητος?)).[197] The man was either a transient official or retiree to Soada-Dionysias. The city may well have become largely Christian by the early fifth century, but we have the case of Gaza in First Palestine as a caution. At a site called Mdjemir, which apparently lies south of Soada near Arra en route to Kapra, a housebuilder named Magnus, a native of Soada-Dionysias (Μάγ[ν]ος οἰκοδ(όμος) Διονυσιεύ[ς]) erected a house bearing a Christian inscription between March–August 516.[198] This suggests that the *territorium* of Soada was Christianized in the early sixth century, not an

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god of the desert, Shai' al-Qaum, with Ammon in a Nabataean inscription at Ṣabḥah. Littmann, PAES IV A, 18.

[193] Supra, Ch. XI, n. 4.

[194] Square uncials. See next two notes.

[195] Waddington, 2327.

[196] Cf. Waddington, 2361. Waddington is probably wrong that bishop Peter's marker predates the Peace of the Church (i.e. 313 A.D.). The square uncials date the inscription no earlier than c. 380. Its lack of a cross may reflect accomodation with the local religious ethos at Canatha, which seems hardly to have been Christian even in the fifth century. Square uncials become common again in the sixth century, and the endowment of hospices by bishops will have become more common by then as well. See the various references collected in Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 901, 906, 911, 922, and 934.

[197] Waddington, 2328.

[198] Waddington, 2299.

implausible hypothesis in view of the early Christian presence in the city.

Kapra (κώμη Κάπρων) (present-day el-Kefr) lies to the south of Soada-Dionysias and just beneath the "high place" Djebel Qulêb.[199] The deities worshipped there included a Semitic Zeus Megistos.[200] The latest pre-Christian inscription belongs to 321 A.D.[201] It names a group of Arabs who were city counsellors of Bostra, Aurelius Philippos, Monimos (Mun'im), and Phaletathos, all of them brothers, and a fourth party called Philip, son of Phaletathos.[202] The inscriptions which have later dates in the fourth through sixth centuries all belong to outsiders, most of them once again retirees, transient imperial officials, or councillors who had suburban houses at Kapra. One of them, who was apparently not a Christian, was Aurelius Montanus son of Theodore, a former imperial *praepositus* who had seemingly aggrandized himself sufficiently to rise to membership in the city council of Bostra. He was buried in Kapra, where his suburban estate perhaps lay, in 350 A.D. (Αὐρ. Μοντανὸς Θεοδώρου β(ουλευτὴς?) Β(οστρηνῶν)).[203] The names of identifiable Christians appear on building inscriptions at Kapra by the end of the fourth century: the *clarissimus* or senator Flavius Bonus, who had served as the *dux Arabiae* (commander of the local cavalry formations) who founded a church;[204] and Maximus the *protector*, who retired to Kapra after having completed ten years' military service with the palatine guards at Constantinople (μετὰ τὸ ἐπολέμ[ι]σεν Μάξιμος προτ(έκτωρ) ἐτῶ(ν) ι′) in March–September 583 A.D.[205] If Kapra was, between the fourth and sixth centuries, little more than a suburban refuge for the upper classes of Bostra as well as soldiers and imperial bureaucrats, its incriptions tell us more about Bostra than the wadis and eminences of Djebel Hauran.

At Kuteibe, which does not appear on the maps, but seems to have lain somewhere along the western rim of the massif, the presbyter Salamanos constructed a church in 575 A.D.[206] The only inscription from the site, an unknown village, it may represent the first church constructed there.

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[199] Butler, PAES II A, 325f.

[200] Waddington, 2292.

[201] Waddington, 2293.

[202] E. Littmann clarified the meaning of the abbreviation BB, rendering it as β(ουλευτὴς) Β(οστρηνῶν). Littmann, PAES III A, 669.

[203] Littmann, PAES III A, 669.

[204] Littmann, PAES III A, 670 (= Waddington, 2293a).

[205] Littmann, PAES III A, 672 (= Waddington, 2294).

[206] Waddington, 2412i.

Apart from Kapra, a suburban offshoot of Bostra, therefore, the western rim of Djebel Hauran appears to have converted to Christianity mainly in the fifth and sixth centuries. The silent rural population which cultivated the vine and revered the old gods finds little representation in this district. The interior of Djebel Hauran indicates a much clearer pattern.

The towns lying along the eastern slopes of Djebel Hauran did not, in general, accept Christianity before the late fifth century, but most often did so much later. The sites which admit of analysis based on the epigraphy, taking them from south to north, are el-Harise, Bosana, Salamanestha, Nela, Djeneine, and Namara. As demonstrated previously, the villages and army camps of the southeastern Hauran plain and southern spurs of Djebel Hauran centering on ancient Salcha (present-day Salkhad) remained largely pagan in the fifth and sixth centuries. This district was the obvious point of access, from a topographical standpoint, to the interior of the massif. It seems useful, therefore, to trace the progress of the new religion from the southernmost town of the central massif, el-Harise, and to work northward thence to Namara.

El-Harise, which does not appear on the map of F.S. Norris' survey, lay southeast of ancient Salamanestha.[207] The place turned up only one building inscription which indicates that the trustees (πιστοί) of the village, a board of three, all of them Arabs, and evidently the village itself, had not yet accepted Christianity in 419 A.D.[208] Unfortunately, no Christian inscription exists at el-Harise to establish the date of its conversion.

To the north lies ancient Salamanestha (present-day Saleh),[209] which can be certified as a pagan or largely pagan village until the reign of Justinian I (527–565). The sequence of dates for pre-Christian inscriptions there runs down to 505 A.D., with the first Christian inscription coming only in 547. The sequence of inscriptions reveals the usual Arabic personal names and a rather striking transition in the onomastics after Christianization. This enables us to suggest positions in the sequence for otherwise undatable inscriptions. The earliest of them mentions some kind of building activity completed by Gadyos son of Themos and Atasthos son of

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[207] I have resolved the position of the village from Waddington's notes. Norris' map is found in: *Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904–5 and 1909, Division I: Geography and Itinerary*, ed. H.C. Butler, F.A. Norris, E.R. Stoever (Leiden 1930), map facing p. 17.

[208] Waddington, 2022a.

[209] Butler, PAES II A, 335f. The village has no attested temples.

Salamanes successfully in 359 A.D.[210] There is no cross on the stone. The next inscription in the sequence commemorates the laying of a lintel, beginning with the formula "For good luck (ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ) and lacking a cross. E. Littmann's examination of the stone revealed a date of 505 A.D.[211] There is a sixth-century inscription on a tomb (μνημῖον) that illustrates the social background to the delays in Christianization experienced at Salamanestha. It belongs no earlier than 499 A.D. because of the use of the omicron-upsilon ligature, a common sixth-century feature:[212]

> The tomb belongs to the four clans, the sons of Dammaia and the sons of the Maurangas and the sons of Akilanos and the sons of Sados (= Sa'd), a communal building enterprise and for no one else. In the year . . . (date missing). Farewell!

The stone has no cross or other sign of Christianity, and so the burials must have been pagan ones. Common buildings would suggest a common cult and world-view about the afterworld of the dead. In this instance four families shared the shrine. These clans represented a considerable part of the population of Salamanestha. The plausible *termini* for the date of the stone are roughly 499–547 A.D. Its letter forms closely resemble those of the previously cited inscription of 505, and so it most likely belongs to the first quarter of the sixth century. The *terminus ante quem* is 547, the date of the first certifiable Christian inscription in the village. It mentions the construction of a martyr chapel (εὐκτήριν ἁγίω(ν) καὶ Δι[---]):[213]

> (Cross) Chapel of the saints and of Di(---). They shall receive the offering favorably . . . and they shall bless the entrance and exit. It was founded in the year 441 (of the era of Arabia) in the month. . . .

This building, where a *periodeutēs* officiated on occasion, marks the beginning of Christianization at Salamanestha. It was probably erected at the instigation of the see of Bostra in accordance with Justinianic policy. Another church was built or restored c. 566–574:[214]

> (Cross) . . . The most holy church was restored under the care of the village council and by the efforts of George and Tios the superinten-

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[210] Littmann, PAES III A, 724 (=Waddington 2254).

[211] Littmann, PAES III A, 725 (=Waddington 2256). The letter forms, as for example the *alpha*, support the insertion of a *tau* in the date. The transcription should read τ̣κα, because the cross bar of the *tau* is visible, and reading it as π̣ is out of the question.

[212] Waddington, 2258.

[213] Littmann, PAES III A, 728.

[214] Waddington, 2261.

> dents, who swore by the holy Trinity that they had made no profit, in the year 46(1–9) of the province. (Cross)

The word "restored" (ἀνενεώθη) should be distrusted, as it is fairly often used for new construction work and has the sense of "built for the first time" or "built something new". George was quite obviously a Christian of long standing. There must have been increasing numbers of them in the village from 547 onwards, the date of the first chapel.[215] The village council had quite obviously become Christian between 547 and 566–74. These dates are quite reasonable in view of the relative isolation of the eastern rim of Djebel Hauran.

There are two other inscriptions at Salamanestha that require notice. The first of these is an undated "One God the helper" text (εἷς Θεὸς ὁ βοηθ[ός]). Its personal onomastics suggest a date not long after the beginnings of Christianization c. 547, the names being the Semitic Salamanos son of Gadouos and the Latinate Gaius son of Sabinus.[216] The inscription has no cross, but is most certainly Christian rather than Jewish. Strictly Christian names like the George of the church inscription belong to a later stage of the site, after formal catechization and baptisms had begun, in the third quarter of the sixth century. There is a second inscription from the time immediately after 547 as well. It betrays similar Latinate-Semitic onomastics but, being less concerned with monotheism, is probably a bit later than the previously noted inscription:[217]

> (Cross) With God helping, Thaimos and Gonthios and Tabiatha their mother completed the tomb of Sabinus, father and spouse, (also being the tomb) of Sabinus and Kyra (their?) siblings.

The "God helping" phrase (+ Θεοῦ βοηθέντος) is certainly posterior to the previously mentioned "One God" formulary. The pre-Christian term for tomb (μνημῖον) was carried over into the early days of Christianization. Nor was any pressing need seen for the catechumenate or the recently baptized to adopt formally Christian names.

There is one last inscription of Salamanestha that is seemingly a crypto-Christian one. It was cut in 460 A.D., and suggests that some few Christians lived in the village before 547:[218]

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[215] The final letter of the date is missing, and so the inscription can have been cut anytime between the years 461–469 of the era of the Provincia Arabia, or 566–574 A.D.

[216] Waddington 2262. The inscription of 505 has a Gadous son of Sabinus in it. Littmann, PAES III A, 725 (=Waddington 2256).

[217] Littmann, PAES III A, 730.

> Here lies Amas son of Thaimos, most beloved to me of all men. His father founded the tomb and Tabeiathē his revered mother finally completed (the) great work whose glory will never perish! In the year 354 (of the province). Farewell, mother!

The inscription has several anomalies as far as the local conventions are concerned. The most important of these is the seemingly crypto-Christian expression "here lies" (ἐνθάδε κε̃τε), an allusion to the impermanence of death and eventual resurrection. These terms do, however, turn up in pagan epigraphy on occasion.[219] The stonecutter or more probably the owners of the tomb knew a smattering of Homeric Greek. In consequence, the usual local term for tomb (μνημῖον) is replaced by the Epic word (τύμβος). The Homeric "glory" (κλέος) turns up here and elsewhere in the more sophisticated Christian Atticist and Hellenic funerary epigrams.[220] The use of the -mi verb "to perish" (ὄλλυμι) seems a bit pretentious in the local context, as is the Homeric "revered" (πότνια). In short, the family of Amas son of Thaimos sought to distance itself from the local Arabs not only by boasting of the "great work" (μέγα ἔργον) of the tomb, but by asserting its superior education and familial love in a slightly high-sounding tone. If we should suppose that the family was Christian, it provides a useful caution about rural patterns of conversion. There is no *prima facie* reason why a Christian family should not have lived in pagan Salamanestha c. 460, particularly if the father had studied grammar while living in Bostra for a time and then returning to his lands in his native village. Such a person might have hitched himself to new trends in religion and have adopted Christianity. Such an interpretation is attractive and in no way contradicts the evidence from other parts of the Hellenistic orient.[221] The real uncertainty is how the family might have been connected with the institutional structure of the rural church, as *periodeutai* are not well attested in Djebel Hauran. A link perhaps existed with the neighboring village of Bosana, which was partially Christian in the fifth century.

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[218] Littmann, PAES III A, 726.

[219] Cf. IGLS 505, from Tillokbarinōn, a village in Djebel Halaqah in the Limestone Massif, which contains a seeming reference to eternal life, although it can hardly be a Christian inscription. For discussion, cf. supra, Ch. X, Sect. 3, n. 94.

[220] Supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 2.

[221] On this point, cf. Ch. VIII, Sect. 1, on the seeming mutual tolerance of rustic pagans and Christians.

To the north of Salamanestha lay Bosana (present-day Būsân).[222] The village was governed by locally selected "judges" (συνδικοί) and councillors (πιστοί) who in the fourth century supervised the construction or repair of various local buildings, including the apse of one structure,[223] the vaulted chamber where the citizens of the village assembled,[224] the workshops (386 A.D.),[225] another public building (358 A.D.)[226] and the masonry around a well (365 A.D.).[227] These inscriptions display no sign of cult, and in lieu of other evidence are presumed to have been the product of a pre-Christian polity, following the principle enunciated in the previous analysis of Salamanestha that communal buildings presuppose a common cult. We also learn of a communal tomb (μνημῖον) constructed in 401 by three shareholders Ouabos, Sabaos son of Naknakios, and another Sabaos.[228] Once again there is no sign of cult.

The culture that generated these complex social institutions was tightly integrated and polytheistic. There is little variety in the personal onomastics found in the inscriptions, the most common local names being Inos, Taurinos, Taēnaēlos, Nazalos, variants of Paulos, and Sabaos. The polytheism reflected in an inscription of 341 A.D. persisted down to at least 401:[229]

> Hail, blessed Banathos with your sacred children Magnos and Esmaēlos, who is (?) like to gods and mortals. . . . the thousandth (?). Esmaēlos and Banathos sons of Paulos cooperated in founding the tomb, a great glory. They obtained it while (still) living. In the year 236 (of the province). (=341/2 A.D.)

The expression "great glory" (μέγα κῦδος) is specifically Homeric. The quasi-Christian or Jewish names Paulos and Esmaēlos were quite obviously in use among pagans, an important caution for reading the inscriptions of the Provincia Arabia. In this instance Epic color went hand in hand with polytheism. The village had at least one temple as well, as a badly damaged inscription attests:[230]

> Boast of [---] of Sabaos the syndic and of [---] ros [---], who restored and dedicated the [rooves?] of the building. God, exalt Bosana!

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[222] Butler, PAES II A, 336–40. Waddington, 2237–2253.
[223] Waddington, 2239a.
[224] Waddington, 2240.
[225] Waddington, 2241.
[226] Littmann, PAES III A, 732.
[227] Waddington, 2239.
[228] Waddington, 2245.
[229] Waddington, 2247.
[230] Waddington, 2242.

The inscription is undated, but the name of one of the syndics, Sabaos, seemingly puts the inscription between the *termini* 322–401, as it was quite a common name then. The vaunt or boast mentioned (καύχημα) is entirely appropriate for a pagan building, as is the builders' commanding the local divinity to exalt Bosana (θεός, ὕψου Βόσανα). The terminology of dedication is typical of Hellenic temple refurbishments (τῆς οἰκο[δομῆς] [ἀν]αστησά[ντων καὶ] ἀφιερο[σάντων]). It is impossible to conjecture the name of the local great god.

The ancient cult of Bosana went into sharp and sudden decline in the late fourth century under unique circumstances. We learn of a martyr cult that arose inside the village when an accepted member of the community named Inos accepted Christianity and was apparently executed: "Chostē the spouse of Inos the martyr contributed 14 (pounds?) in gold to the house of prayer" (Χόστη σύμβιος Ἴνου τοῦ μάρτυρος προσέφερεν τῷ οἴκῳ τῆς εὐχῆς χρυσίνου δεκατέσσερας).[231] Many pagans bore the local name Inos, but the only dated inscription mentioning it refers to the sons of a certain Inos who completed some building project in 322.[232] He was doubtless different from the Christian Inos, who seems to have lived later. The circumstances of his martyrdom can be conjectured with a degree of accuracy. His family was prosperous to judge from the monies later expended by his wife to build the martyrion in his name. Inos apparently aroused local ire by his conversion and was put down by a decree of the syndics and *pistoi* of Bosana. This may have come during Julian's ephemeral presence in the East in 362–363. The family was secure enough financially to survive until the new religion gained an institutional presence in the village when another local of some standing named Tarinos son of Gennadios (=Taurinus, a common name at Bosana) became the local presbyter in or before 390. He erected a building with his own funds that displayed the cross on its foundation inscription.[233] This Tarinos may have been the friend and collaborator of Inos the martyr, and also the syndic who, interestingly, worked with a certain Inos on the building project recorded on a different undated inscription.[234] It is quite possible that the families of Tarinos and Inos' widow gained political strength during the pro-Christian reign of Theodosius the Great (379–395). This culminated in the construction of a martyrion over the grave of St. Inos and the celebration of the Christian liturgy there by his friend Tarinos. The prestige of the cult grew thereafter and led in time to the Christianization of the village. So, for example, a "Christ conquers" inscription turns up on a house lintel (undated) (+ Χρισ+τὸς νικᾷ +).[235] It is difficult to trace the chronology of Christianization thereafter, because the next dated Christian inscription comes only in the later sixth century. The personal onomastics had not entirely changed by then, with the survival of the name Kadamos until 573 ((Cross) "I Kadamos son of . . . have made a gift to holy God from my own properties in behalf of the bishop Menas").[236] The church became firmly grounded at Bosana between 390–573, and the rise of a martyr cult, coupled with the political influence of his family, were critical elements in the accelerating Christianization of the village, but the demographic extent of this transition by the end of the fifth century cannot be measured.

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[231] Waddington, 2249.

[232] Waddington, 2238.

[233] Littmann, PAES III A, 736 (=Waddington, 2252). The reading of the date is not clear, but is plausible as the editors give it.

[234] Waddington, 2243.

Ancient Nela (present-day il-Musennef) is the next village north of Bosana. Various pagan funerary inscriptions lie about, but only two of them, including one Christian text, have late dates.[237] The only Christian inscription was cut on a cave in 492 A.D. and convincingly marks the *terminus ante quem* for the Christianization of the site:[238]

> (Cross) Receive, O Lord, the offering of your servant Seos the archdeacon. He built it from his own funds in the year 387 (of the province) when Diocles was bishop. Tadous (and) Zosimos were the builders. (Cross)

The cave may have been fitted out as an *ad hoc* chapel or martyrion. Diocles was bishop either at Nela or some neighboring place having episcopal status.[239]

The inscriptions of ancient Namara (present-day Nimreh) are mostly pre-Christian. The personal names on them are Semitic or Greek, as for example Diomedes.[240] The funerary epigraphy is lacking in signs of cult (3rd–4th c.). There is one Christian inscription in a late script. It marks the tomb of two presbyters with Arabic names, but is undated.[241] H.C. Butler mentions the existence of a church at Namara, but fails to assign it a date.[242] Little can therefore be done to bring this site into the overall scheme of Djebel Hauran.

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[235] Littmann, PAES III A, 739 (=Waddington 2253).

[236] Waddington, 2250.

[237] Waddington, 2211–2235. The site has a temple and temenos dedicated to an unknown god dating from c. 171 A.D. Outside there is a large ancient pool. H.C. Butler regards the site as a very ancient one, and the Roman temple as a seemingly late addition. Butler, AAES II, 346–351.

[238] Waddington, 2235.

[239] Nela's first attested bishop, Gautus, attended the Council of Chalcedon in 451. Brünnow-Domaszewski, *Provincia Arabia* 3, 345f.

[240] Waddington, 2176.

There is, finally, Djeneineh, which seems to be near ancient Namara but is missing from F.S. Norris' topographical map of the sites visited by the Princeton expedition. The epigraphy contains no sign of Christianity. There is one inscription, however, which reflects the enthusiasm with which Julian the Apostate's restoration of the temples was greeted in the Provincia Arabia:[243]

> Thanks to the divine assent of our master the emperor Julian, the civic board of Genēenōn (?) built the temple of the god [---]dēou under the supervision of Sopater.

The lack of consistency shown in the inscriptions of Djebel Hauran about the acceptance of Christianity is partly a consequence of villages like this one, where the civic board (τὸ κοινόν) unrelentingly resisted the advance of the new religion.

The villages of the eastern face of Djebel Hauran reflect a rather slow development of Christian ecclesiastical institutions. With the exception of Bosana, where the church encountered sharp political opposition in the late fourth century, the new religion grew slowly or hardly at all until the second quarter of the sixth century, when the imperial government forced the issue in accordance with the Justinianic laws of 529 on Hellenic religion.

Djebel Hauran was, until that time, a region of great local religious diversity. The differing allegiances make a patchwork on the map of religious transition that was probably quite typical of other rural backwaters between 370–529. It remains to have a look at one last such place, the Ledjā.

III. The Ledjā

The Ledjā, also known as Trachonitis, is a vast basaltic depression surrounded by high cliffs lying over against the northwestern tip of

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[241] Waddington, 2185.

[242] Butler, PAES II A, 343f. In Butler, *Early Churches*, 22ff., the church is given a 4th c. date on purely stylistic grounds, but this is to be distrusted. For a similar case of faulty dating, see supra, Ch. XI, n. 164. There is no reason whatever to suppose that Namara has an active ecclesiastical structure at so early a date, and the burden of proof really lies with those who wish to establish one.

[243] Waddington, 2187.

Djebel Hauran. Arab tribes settled in the Ledjā at an early date, and the personal and tribal nomenclature abounds in the epigraphy of the sites there, which are numerous in the south despite the harsh climate and lack of vegetation. The inscriptions give a fuller picture of the pre-Christian religious life of the Ledjā than previously seen in the Hauran, but this advantage is negated by the lack of dated early Christian inscriptions that enable the historian to gauge the pace of religious transition between 370–529. The difficulty of the terrain is such that we would first have expected Christianity to enter the Ledjā along its outer fringes, and only thereafter to penetrate to the villages of the interior. There is, in fact, little to suggest that the new religion had an impact at more than a few sites in the Ledjā before the early sixth century. Some sites seem never to have been Christianized at all. It is interesting as well that the impetus for this seems not to have come in the southeast from the direction of Bostra, the metropolitan see of the Provincia Arabia. Christianity first took root firmly in the southwestern corner of the Ledjā.

Ancient Zorava, (present-day Zor'ah or Ezr'a) lies in the southwesternmost corner of the Ledjā on the high ground above the depression. The place had received its first bishop by 542, but betrays no sign of Christianity before that date. The site has a peculiarly cosmopolitan character. It was technically the chief village of the district ([μητρο]κωμία Ζοραουηνῶν), which must have embraced the southwestern and central Ledjā in the second quarter of the third century,[244] and probably kept this status even after the Diocletianic reorganization of the provinces c. 300. Its earliest known inhabitants were Nabataean Arabs who toiled as farmers (Ζοραουηνῶν γεωργοί), making contributions to the imperial cult c. 161–180.[245] The local tribal unit was called the Saamenoi in the Greek,[246] but at least one group of settlers from another tribe had migrated there, the Migdalenoi, who came from the village of Mdjedil in the eastern Ledjā probably no later than the third century A.D.[247] The folk knew the rudiments of basaltic stone architecture and, apart from temples, erected many houses (3rd c. A.D.)[248] and even baths (c. 222–235 A.D.).[249] Zorava thus had a quasi-urban character well before the era of Christianization. The

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[244] Waddington, 2480.
[245] Waddington, 2479.
[246] Waddington, 2481.
[247] Waddington, 2483.
[248] Waddington, 2482, 2483.
[249] Waddington, 2480.

lingua franca was of course Greek. The local population was augmented by army veterans who established families in town. These men had Greek and Latinate names, and may in fact have been Arabs initially recruited from the province.[250] As with other parts of the Provincia Arabia, education in the Greek *paideia* persisted in the third century. We learn this from a hexametric epigram celebrating the completion of a building (3rd c.?) soundly composed in Homeric phrases:[251]

> You peer now only into the porch of the courtyard. When Maximus shall complete the entire of it, and forthwith this be done, you shall see rooms all resembling those of Alkinous. He would like to complete them for his children and for them when they beget children of their own. To Zeus the Fulfiller.

These verses are correctly spelled and give a more favorable view of the study of grammar in Zorava than one gets from the villages of Djebel Hauran or of rural Phrygia.[252]

The epigram gives an erroneous picture, however, of the local pre-Christian religiosity, which had little to do with literary conventions about the Olympian gods. The only attested local divinity is Theandrites, the "human-faced god", whose cult remained quite strong in Late Antique Arabia and has been noted elsewhere.[253] A single inscription at Zorava, dedicated in the name of the entire tribal unit, invokes Theandrites in behalf of a group of unknown emperors seemingly of the third century or of the Tetrarchic period (c. 253–337): "The Saamenoi of Zorava built a temple for Theandrites in behalf of the safety and victory of our lords (the emperors)" (Θεανδρ[ίτῃ] ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας καὶ νείκης τῶν κυρίων οἰκοδόμησαν οἰκίαν Σααμηνοὶ οἱ ἀπό Ζοραουηνῶν).[254] It can be presumed that, as in other districts, this cult remained strong at Zorava until the place was Christianized.

The material evidence at Zorava reveals few signs of the new religion until the first quarter of the sixth century. At that time the temple of Theandrites was pulled down. A previously quoted inscription ended up in the octagonal martyrion of St. George that was completed in 515, the *terminus ante quem* for the demolition of the temple (οἰκία).[255] Various pre-Christian funerary markers and other stones ended up as spolia in St. George's as well,[256] as also in the church of Mar Elijah, which was erected in 542.[257] The interpretation of the Christian inscriptions on these buildings will detain us in due course. Here it must be remarked that two inscriptions with square uncials of a kind popular in northern Syria between c. 380–420 were built into the church of Mar Elijah. One is the funerary marker of Iovios son of Tobeios. It bears no cross and cannot be adjudged to be the Jewish or Christian name "Tobias", but derives from the Arabic "Thubai'."[258] The second inscription adheres closely to the literary conventions of the fourth-century epigraphy of the Limestone Massif:[259]

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[250] Waddington, 2486–2488.

[251] Waddington, 2484.

[252] Cf. supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 2.

[253] Supra, Ch. I, Sect. 3, and Ch. XI, Sect. 1.

[254] Waddington, 2481.

[255] For architectural details, see Butler, AAES II, 411–413, and Butler, *Early Churches*, 122–25. Infra, this section, n. 270.

> Ambrilios the *centenarius* laid the foundations. Palladios the barrister completed it with the help of his sons. And may it be double for you, health, life!

The *centenarius* was a mid-level grade held by *agentes in rebus* who serves the Master of Offices, but also a non-commissioned officer in the army.[260] As usual, its seems that the man had come to Zorava after retirement and did not live to see the completion of the building. It cannot be proven that Ambrilios or the succeeding owner Palladios were Christians, and the valedictory formula reinforces this view (καὶ σὺ τὰ διπλᾶ, ὑγία, ζοή). None of the third-century funerary steles betray traces of Christianity either.[261] It must be supposed, at very least, that the new religion had some existence at Zorava prior to the construction of the two churches in 542 and 515, but criticism of the Christian inscriptions of the sixth century there suggests that it was of no long duration.

A Christian inscription of 542/3 commemorates the laying of the door lintel of the church of Mar Elijah the prophet:[262]

> (Cross) The people of Zorava built the church of Elijah the prophet from their own funds by the exertion of John son of Menneos the deacon in the year 437 (of the province) when the most God-beloved Ouaros was bishop, upon whom God brought the fate of the bubonic plague in the armpit.

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[256] Waddington, 2482, 2483, 2488, 2496.
[257] Waddington, 2485, 2490.
[258] Waddington, 2490.
[259] Waddington, 2485.
[260] Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 399, 578, 634.
[261] Waddington, 2494–2496.
[262] Waddington, 2497. I wish to thank Johannes Koder who supplied me with a photo and M. Restle's corrected transcription.

The cult of the prophet Elijah had great importance in the Ledjā during the epoch of Christianization.[263] His ascent into the sky atop a fiery chariot was perhaps consistent with earlier notions about man's helplessness beneath the domain of the great solar divinity, the god of Aumos, who battered the basaltic depression below Zorava with his rays. Men might now in spite of their humanity aspire to rise with Elijah into the sky beside the incarnate God. This hypothesis is vaguely confirmed by a phrase in another inscription on the exterior wall of the apse of Mar Elijah's (6th c.):[264]

> (Cross) He has run over to faith. (Cross) Theodore the city councillor, by his exertion and works, in recompense for good things (from) the prophet Elijah, is with the angels in the heavens. (Cross)

It seems clear that Theodore the city councillor (πρωτεύων) was one of the first Zoravenes to accept Christianity, and he implicitly bids his fellow citizens to take the same advice with the assertion: "He has run across to faith" (πίστ(ε)ι διέδραμεν). This expression self-consciously echoes the second law of the emperor Zeno requiring the Hellenes of the empire to "run to the churches" and accept baptism.[265] In contrast to Theodore, there were perhaps more than a few pagans left in Zorava around 542.

This hypothesis is borne out even further by the incorporation of a fairly standard pagan liturgy on a second church belonging to the sixth century:[266]

> We set our (offerings) before you, O Christ our God. Accept the offering of those who made offerings (in the past) and make offerings (now) in this church by the prayer of her who begat you. Accept the two copper coins of the widow.

The formula mentioning the fruit-bearers past and present (τῶν καρποφορησάντων καὶ καρποφορούντων) had a pre-Christian currency and significance, notwithstanding its later use in the churches.[267] This is again consistent with the other evidence suggesting that the new religion had only recently replaced the cult of

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[263] It is difficult to credit Waddington's hypothesis, however, that the prophet replaced the sun-god of the local pantheon because of the similarity of their names, Helios and Elias. For discussion on this question, see supra, Ch. II, *prooem.* and n. 4.

[264] Waddington, 2499. The syntax of the inscription is quite tortured.

[265] Supra, Ch. I, n. 377.

[266] The inscription has square uncials and makes use of the omicron-upsilon ligature. Waddington, 2500.

[267] Supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 2. Cf. Waddington, 2500 for brief commentary.

Theandrites at Zorava. The same church has another inscription which makes the same point:[268]

> (Cross) Our God is a great god who performs miracles as much as he is able, rooting out lawless acts (and) outdoing injustices. The monad is a Triad and the Triad is a monad.

There was fundamentally no point in calling the Christian God a great god unless there were other local divinities to be reckoned with (+μέγας θεὸς ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν). As Waddington observes, the formula is consistent with Psalm 95.3: "God is a great lord and great king over all the (pagan) gods" (Θεὸς μέγας κύριος καὶ βασιλεὺς μέγας ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς θεούς). The monotheistic formula is unique in the epigraphy of Syria and Arabia, being derived from the Athanasian creed (ἡ μονὰς ἐν τριάδει, καὶ ἡ τριὰς ἐν μονάδει etc.).[269] The allusiveness of the inscription provides unmistakable evidence that polytheism and the cult of the local great god at Zorava was of recent memory.

This reconstruction is fully consistent with the lintel inscription of the octagonal martyrion of St. George at Zorava, which was completed in 515, the first Christian building of the town. The inscription was cited in a previous chapter, but it is necessary to quote it here again in its proper context:[270]

> The abode of *daimones* has become the house of God. The light of salvation shines where darkness caused concealment. Where sacrifices to idols occurred, now there are choirs of angels. Where God was provoked, now He is propitiated. A certain Christ-loving man, the town-councillor John, son of Diomedes, offered a gift to God from his own property, a beautiful building, after installing within it the worthy body of the martyr George, who appeared to this John not in a dream, but manifestly.

The donor John was of the first Christian generation at Zorava to judge from his father Diomedes' Hellenic name and from John's preoccupation with the *daimones* of the old religion and the "sacrifices to idols" (θυσίαι εἰδώλων). Like the Theodore who built Mar Elijah's in 542, John was a city councillor with the requisite wealth for such a task. The actual work on the church was begun after the donor underwent some religious experience, the waking vision of St. George,[271] and it cannot be excluded that this event brought about the man's conversion from polytheism.[272] There is little doubt that the *martyrion* was built over a pagan temple.[273] The prescript of the inscription makes this obvious, and of course the requisite relics were found to destroy the power of the divinity of the temenos, which was most probably Theandrites. John's vision was perhaps cited as a confirmation of the Christian God's power to perform miracles noted in an inscription on one of the other churches at Zorava (ὅσος δυνατός, ποιῶν θαυμάσια).[274]

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[268] Waddington, 2501. Same square uncials as Waddington 2500.

[269] Ibid.

[270] Prentice, AAES III, 437a. Supra, Ch. XI, n. 255 for architectural details.

[271] On the waking vision of the Hellene Abedrapsas of the village of Frikyā in Djebel Riha in the Apamene, see supra, Ch. II, Sect. 1, and Ch. X, Sect. 6.

Two funerary stones at Zorava require brief comment. The pre-Christian view of death and the afterlife is illustrated by the inscription set up for Aurelius Azizos. It perhaps belongs in the fourth or fifth century A.D.:[275]

> Aurelius Azizos, son of Anamos, a man honored in life, and Anamos and Bernikianos his sons, built the tomb out of their own toil and at their own expense for themselves and their heirs and Azizos son of Theodore, who died and is (now) in the underworld.

The eschatological pessimism of the Hellenic world-view needs no further elaboration here (ἀπογενομένου καὶ ἐν τῷ καταγέῳ). The second tomb is more difficult to judge in terms of the cult of its owner. It is cut in the late square uncials characteristic of the early sixth-century inscriptions of Zorava:[276]

> Aineias built a brilliant grave marker for himself and his family, having earned the glory of a hundred-armed army and having bound the imperishable Indus, after extending the hands of his own brothers to it. Because of this, may God grant him good things. If anyone partakes of novel praise, may he (God?) grant hardship to that man.

The language of the epigram is almost entirely Homeric. It is a frankly incomprehensible and overwritten panegyric which equates this Aineias with the hundred-armed water giant Briareos of *Iliad* 1.403 and Alexander the Great. Aineias was evidently an army veteran who had paid for his sons to get the best education in grammar possible. The epigram is quite sophisticated by provincial standards and speaks well for the level of literary culture at Zorava. The cult of Aineias hinges on a grammatically monotheistic clause toward the end of the inscription: "Because of this may God grant him good things" (τοὔνεκα οἷ τὰ μὲν ἐσθλὰ πόροι θεός). As the receiver of these favors will have been dead at the time of their bestowal, one gets the idea that some sort of afterlife is envisioned, but it is unclear whether this should be understood as that of a Christian saint in paradise or something else. The inscription fits quite conveniently into the first quarter of the sixth century because of its letter forms. It will be recalled that two Christian magnates of Zorava, John son of Diomedes and Theodore the city councillor, were making an open display of their Christianity between 512–515. If Aineias' family were Christian, there was strictly speaking no reason why it had to endorse monotheism in *koiné* Greek, particularly if they knew something of the Greek *paideia*. On the other hand, Zorava does seem to have been at an early stage of Christianization. If John and Theodore spoke for the town councillors who had accepted the new religion, Aineias may in equal measure represent the other side of the story. If so, his family perhaps veiled its polytheism in quasi-monotheistic language for the sake of accommodating itself to the new drift of religious thinking at Zorava. It is impossible for the present to be more precise.

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[272] Hypnopompic phenomena cannot be excluded here. Cf. C. Jung's purely biological-psychological explanation of seemingly "waking visions" in Jung, "So-called Occult Phenomena." 61ff.

[273] The topic formation of the inscription makes this obvious. Cf. supra, Ch. II, Sect. 2–4, Ch. III, Sect. 4, and Ch. VIII, Sect. 3–4. H.C. Butler was evidently unable to discover remains of the pagan temple at Zorava in question. He observes: "The inscription *implies* (my italics) that the church occupies the site of a Pagan temple." Butler, *Early Churches*, 125. Both Waddington (no. 2498) and Deichmann ("Kirchen in Heiligtümern" no. 14) concur on this point.

[274] Waddington, 2501.

[275] Prentice, AAES III, 435. The inscription has the round uncials characteristic of this period.

[276] Prentice, AAES III, 437 (= CIG 4.4563). Waddington notes this inscription under his own no. 2496a, but does not publish it.

Zorava provides the archetypal example of a town switching sides to the new religion with the conversion of the decurion class. The infusion of money into church buildings gave Christianity a "high profile" that in time drew polytheists to the new cult. The one missing fragment of information is the precise date at which ecclesiastical institutions began at Zorava. The place certainly had a bishop in 542, whose barbarous personal name Ouaros or the Latinate Varus suggests local citizenship. This is also the case with the deacon John's patronymic, Menneos.[277] It appears that the very small local church came to terms with the city councillors in the first quarter of the sixth century, the conversion of Theodore and John between c. 500–540 being the critical pivot around which the Christianization of Zorava finally turned. Thereafter episcopal solidarity with the decurions grew and with it the size of the catechumenate, with the common people imitating the example of their social betters. But this began as a pre-Justinianic phenomenon that shows no signs of legal or fiscal coercion.

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[277] Waddington, 2497.

It remains to deal with the rest of the Ledjā. The sample of dated inscriptions at other sites is relatively small, and so the following analysis will necessarily be more inferential than what was given for Zorava.

To begin with, Christianity made an early entry by local standards into the western Ledjā at Sūr, a village lying some 12.5 kilometers north-northeast of Zorava. The new religion was perhaps widely received, for a lintel inscription records a prayer for the entire village:[278]

> (Cross) Saint Leontios, be the help of our village! (Cross) Chabos son of Eutolmios writes this in the eleventh indiction. (Date) (Cross) (Written) by the hand of Elijah son of Baracheos.

The date was 458 A.D. Sūr, whose ancient name is unknown, was an important village or *mētrokōmia* like Zorava.[279] Its previous cults are unknown except from a Latin inscription mentioning Jupiter Ammon, whose cult is uncharacteristic of the district and probably an intrusive one.[280] The prayer to St. Leontios belongs to the first or second Christian generation. The cult of the prophet Elijah affected the earliest nomenclature here as well, all of which suggests that religious cultural mechanisms were in play here similar to those at Zorava, but half a century earlier. The effect was felt elsewhere as well. At idj-Djādj in the south-central Ledjā, a certain Elijah son of Kaiamos constructed a *martyrion* of the prophet in the sixth century. The Chi-Rho of the first line hints at recent conversion.[281] Similarly, at ancient Rimea in the southeast, Elijah's name stands in a victory inscription: "Elijah (cross) conquers! His *tychē* (cross) conquers the whole world! (Cross)" ('Ηλίαν + νικᾷ. ἡ τύ+χη τὸν κό[σμον]+).[282] It apparently belongs to the sixth century. Formularies of this kind appear repeatedly in the context of recent Christianization, and there is no reason to doubt that this was the prevailing situation in the Ledjā between c. 500–550. There is one last example from ancient Norerhathē, which seems to have lain somewhere near Rimea at the southeastern corner of the Ledjā:[283]

> Sergius son of Samaathos of the village of Norerhathē of the Soborene tribe built the church of St. Elijah out of his own funds in the year

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[278] Littmann, PAES III A, 797^3.

[279] Littmann, PAES III A, 797^2.

[280] Littmann, PAES III A, 797. But cf. the possible existence of a Nabataean equivalent of Zeus Ammon. Supra, Ch. XI, n. 192.

[281] Littmann, PAES III A, 791 (=Waddington, 2436). The inscription has square uncials and is quite fragmentary.

[282] Waddington, 2425. Infra, Appendix VI.

[283] Waddington, 2431.

> 458 (of the province) in the . . . indiction. Good luck (with God?) helping (?).

By this time, 564 A.D., the prophet Elijah had become the predominant intercessor in the Ledjā even for Arabs knowing of the cult of St. Sergius. The region had been thoroughly Christianized by this time, lying as it does on the edge of the depression not far from the Roman road running north from Bostra.

The present-day site of Umm iz-Zeitūn lies in this area on the eastern edge of the Ledjā. It too was Christianized in the sixth century, although the datable inscriptions show a wide gap between that time and the third century. Army veterans were settled there in the later third century (c. 282 A.D.). It also had a rather small temple surmounted by a cupola. The god's name is unknown:[284]

> For good luck. The governing board of the village and of the god built the sacred hut through the supervisors Ulpius Cassianus the veteran, and Gadouos son of Saouros the councillor, and Nigreinos son of Marrinos the veteran.

The village saw the beginnings of the new religion only in the sixth century, to judge from the letter forms of an inscription commemorating the foundation of a *martyrion* erected by Anatolios son of Valens.[285] An undatable inscription records another *martyrion* at Shaqrah, which seems to lie in the neighborhood of Umm iz-Zeitūn.[286] In neither case is the name of the saint mentioned.

The picture of Christianization can be more finely drawn from the villages in the central Ledjā, where the inscriptions record the names of the local divinities and a small number of "One God" inscriptions have turned up as well. The lack of dated texts leaves the chronology uncertain, and so one is inclined to put the Christianization of this area mainly between 500–550, with some prior conversions in the second half of the fifth century. This was perhaps the situation at the ancient Damatha (present-day Damit il-ʿAlyā). Dedications to three deities are recorded, including an altar to Zeus the Light-bringing Hearkener (2nd–3rd c.).[287] This combination of epithets seems to syncretize the characteristics of two local gods, the rain-bringer and sun god. It should be borne in mind that altars could always be used, so long as pagans still lived in the village.

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[284] Littmann, PAES III A, 765^{13} (=Waddington, 2546) and 765^{12} (=Waddington, 2545).

[285] Waddington, 2548 (square uncials). Butler, *Early Churches*, 250.

[286] Waddington, 2510.

[287] Littmann, PAES III A, 800^{1}.

This was still the case as late as 432 A.D. when an inscription without a cross was erected for two dead men. It fits the Hellenic funerary conventions quite well:[288]

> Saddos son of Danoubios and Ameros son of Hekotos, having passed life well and in moderation and in contentment, built (this) out of their own funds for the sake of remembrance. (Date)

Other cults will have persisted through the mid-fifth century. The construction of a temple dedicated to the "Invincible god of Aumos" under the supervision of the village governing board is recorded on an undated block (θεῷ ἀνικήτῳ Αυμου)(3rd c.?),[289] as is the dedication of a propylon or gate to "Mistress Athena" (Ἀ[θ]ηνᾷ τῇ κυρί[ᾳ] Τάννηλος Μοαιέρου [τ]ὸ πρόπ[υλ]ον ἀνέθηκεν).[290] The first of these divinities is unnamed according to Semitic custom and is titled by Aumos, an adherent of his from a bygone age.[291] The local Athena is the Hellenized variant of the Arabian Allāt. She quite evidently received worship from sedentary Arabs as well as pastoralists.

The continuous stream of Hellenic religiosity at Damatha was disrupted in the decades after 432, wherein belongs an important monotheistic inscription on a house lintel:[292]

> One God, the helper of Tobeias in the task of building when he built this out of his own funds. And may He who helped at the task of building also help in the nuptials with Gadrathē.

The householder Tobias, whose name came from the Septuagint, may have borne it before his apparent admission to the catechumenate. Although the inscription bears no cross, conversion to Christianity is more probable at this time and place than to Judaism. Tobias' request that his God assist with the nuptials (κὴ ὁ βοθέσας εἰς τὴν οἰκοδόμην, βοηθήσῃ κὲ εἰς τοὺς γάμους Γαδραθη) hints that, with the coming of monotheism, the task of blessing marriage and granting it offspring had been removed from a previous fertility goddess and attributed now to the multispecialized Christian God.[293] The site shows no sign of a martyr cult or that of St. Elijah, and is in that respect different from the places already seen lying along the southern edge of the Ledjā. Only one other "One God" inscription has turned up in the district, this at Admedera. It lacks a cross, but like the previous one was most likely erected by recently Christianized Arabs.[294]

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[288] Littmann, PAES III A, 800.

[289] Littmann, PAES III A, 800^2.

[290] Waddington, 2453.

[291] Littmann, PAES III A, 800^2. Aumos was perhaps a priest. Infra, Appendix VI.

[292] Littmann, PAES III A, 800^8 (=Waddington, 2451).

[293] Cf. Littmann, PAES III A, 792 (Djren) for an attestation of Atargatis in the Ledjā. On the Edessan Atargatis, see Drijvers, *Cults at Edessa* 175.

There is one other well attested site in the Ledjā called Ḥarrān. Here Christianity is better represented than the cults of Arabic polytheism. There is one votive inscription dating from between c. 212–375 A.D. or even later. It addresses "mistress Athena", that is the Arabic Allāt.[295] The four village administrators completed a public hostel in 397/8. Its lintel inscriptions lack crosses and there is no particular reason to suppose that a majority of the village councillors, who have mostly Arabic and Latinate names, was Christian at this early date.[296]

The Christian inscriptions of Ḥarrān are undated, and so it is quite difficult to be more precise about chronology. The earliest of these bears a formula having elements commonly attested in the fifth century, and may hopefully be placed between c. 450–500:[297]

> I Kabbeos the deacon shall confess many blessings to God and his Christ who helped if he completes for me the gift of the building of this house.

The "I confess" formula (5th c.?) was grafted onto a common "One God and his Christ who helps" statement, but the monotheistic "One" was omitted either through error or because it seemed irrelevant. Nothing about the inscription compels a sixth century date. The building in question was perhaps a small church manned by the deacon as the sole representative of the see of Bostra. Kabbeos quite obviously looked to its completion with great uncertainty, worried as it seems because the monies could not be raised to complete the place, and hence his desire for a divine "gift" (προσφορά). The Christians of Ḥarrān were quite few at this time. The church inscription mentioning the bishop Theodore belongs to a later stage of Christianization. He need not have resided in Ḥarrān to have been commemorated in the fashion given ([ἐπὶ Θεο]δώρου [τ]οῦ ἡμῶν ἐπι[σ]κ[όπου]), and so the actual site of his see is unknown.[298] Still later a Christian Arab named Aumos built a funerary monument for himself near the church (οἴκου Θεοῦ προπάροιθεν). The inscription mentions a presbyter who was evidently the dominant local ecclesiastic.[299] It belongs c. 500–550. In 568 the phylarch or chieftain of the allied Arab frontier cavalry built a *martyrion* of St. John.[300] He was probably not a local resident. The gradual growth of nascent church institutions is well documented at Ḥarrān but difficult to date. On the face of it it seems not to have been an episcopal see. We should not be too anxious to push the time of its Christianization back into the later fifth century.

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[294] Waddington, 25621. Butler notes, at Damatha, a small, single-aisled church. Butler, PAES II A, 435. In its arrangement (being a hall church with a transverse system) it closely resembles the Tyche temple at is-Sanamen which lies c. 30 miles away. Butler later assigned the church at Damatha to the fourth century on the basis of style alone. Butler, *Early Churches*, 21. As noted above, these sorts of arguments cannot of themselves carry decisive weight. Supra, Ch. XI, n. 164.

[295] Waddington, 2461. The inscription has rounded uncials. The dedicands have the names Aurelius as *praenomen*, which became common in the provinces after the Constitutio Antoniniana in 212 and still had considerable currency down to the late fourth century. Cf. Supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 2.

[296] Littmann, PAES III A, 794, 794^1 (=Waddington, 2462, 2463).

[297] Waddington, 2466.

Ancient Agraina (present-day Lubbēn) lies not far from Ḥarrān. The village commune of Agraina financed the construction of a temple to the god of Aumos in 213 with monies provided by the temple treasurers.[301] A beam later reused for the construction of a church is dated 417 A.D. It lacks a cross and provides the *terminus post quem* for the Christianization of the village.[302] An altar of uncertain date has also turned up.[303] A funerary inscription combines pagan and Christian conventions. It was set up within a generation of the introduction of the new religion. Unfortunately it is not dated:[304]

> Aurelia daughter of Audēs says: Be brave, Arenios son of Arenios, no one is immortal! You completed your life well and decorously. So give thanks always to God the Pantokrator who helped us. . . . We made you a tomb for (your) repose and remembrance.

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[298] Waddington, 2467.

[299] Waddington, 2465.

[300] Waddington, 2464. The inscription lies on the portal of the church and is bilingual in Greek and Arabic.

[301] Littmann, PAES III A, 793 (=Waddington 2455). Cf. Littmann, PAES III, A, 793^{1}.

[302] Littmann, PAES III A, 793^{3}. H.C. Butler has mistakenly taken the date given on the reused stone as that of the church's final construction, but this is surely wrong. A church lintel will at any rate have had Christian symbols and perhaps also a dedication, as a vast number of examples attest. Butler, *Early Churches*, 41f. There is a second undated church at Agraina. Butler, PAES II A, 420f. and Illustration 362. It is not entirely likely that these structures should date before 450, to judge from the overall picture of Christianization in the Djebel Hauran.

[303] Littmann, PAES III A, 793^{9}.

[304] Waddington, 2459.

The praenomen Aurelius/Aurelia went out of style in the more Hellenized provinces like the Phrygias by the end of the fourth century, but may have survived in Arabia for a century or more thereafter. The exhortation about immortality appears in both Christian and pagan epigraphy, but really belongs to the conventions of the latter, as do the compliments about having lived honorably. The inscription bears no Christian symbols at all, but invokes the name of the helping God of the Christians, who is also styled as the all-sovereign or *pantokrator*, an expression that goes straight back to the late first century in Christian usage, but was also used in Jewish and Hellenic contexts (τῷ παντοκράτορι Θε[ῷ]τ[ῷ] βοηθήσαντι ἡμῶν).[305] The inscription is quite clearly transitional but provides no useful dating criteria. The lower limit for the name "Aurelia" is probably c. 450–475 A.D. Even so, a date even after 500 cannot be excluded.

The present-day village of Djrēn gives the impression of having been Christianized in the sixth century. It lies just north of Agraina. There are two relevant inscriptions. The first of them is on the funerary stele of Fasaielē daughter of Ameros. It has no cross and bears the date 543 A.D.[306] The second inscription on a lintel consists of nothing but Christian symbols: Cross-Alpha-Cross-Omega-Cross-Alpha. All the crosses except that on the far left were *erased*.[307] It is conceivable that a pagan householder took over the dwelling and removed the offending signs lest visitors and neighbors be confused about his religious identity. Djrēn would seem to have resisted Christianization down to 550 or even beyond, one more convincing proof of John of Ephesus' assertion that the empire had a noticeable pagan minority even in the third quarter of the sixth century.[308] If so, the rustics at Djrēn will have continued to sacrifice at an altar of Atargatis that has survived.[309]

At Deir idj-Djuwani an instance can be seen of St. Elijah replacing the local god. Various lintels and blocks indicate the existence of a priesthood and temple of the god Lykourgos.[310] Neither these nor the single relevant Christian inscription can be dated with precision. The latter is cut on a lintel that perhaps belonged to a small Christian shrine:[311]

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[305] E.g. *I Clement prooim*. Cf. Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1005, and *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, ed. Walter Bauer, tr. W.F. Arndt and F.W. Gingrich (Chicago 1979), 608f.

[306] Littmann, PAES III A, 792^1.

[307] Littmann, PAES III A, 792^2.

[308] Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 329–34.

[309] Littmann, PAES III A, 792.

[310] Littmann, PAES III A, 801^1, 801^2, 801^6. The site has a small church that has some architectural features in common with 4th c. churches. Butler puts it in the sixth-century nevertheless. PAES II A, 436. *Early Churches*, 121. It should be clear

> Holy Elijah, prophet and elder, may you do well (Cross) in our behalf. Aumos slave. (Cross) The others (are) (Cross) Malikat (Cross) (and) Molimos. (Cross) Thomas made it.

The interpretation of the letters is not entirely certain, but the excessive use of crosses suggests a fervid reliance on the new Christian dispensation.

IV. Conclusions

The subject of Christianity among the Arabs has of late engaged the attention of scholars, but little of this work has addressed the conversion of the sedentary communities living in the Provincia Arabia.[312] It was here that Christianization most closely followed the pattern extant elsewhere in the Eastern Roman Empire. The earliest signs of the new religion emerge in the provincial capital Bostra, and spread rather quickly to communities large and small in the western Hauran plain, of which Umm el-Jimal is the best documented example (mid-4th c.). The eastern borderlands of the Hauran lying on the plain near Salcha and beyond were a different matter, however. Here Christian villages are the exception to the rule until the later fifth century, and some places did not go that way until the sixth. Of particular relevance is the reconstruction of the Theandriteion of Bosoa in 387 A.D. and the purification of another cultic edifice there in 517 A.D. There is not a shred of evidence to prove that the village was ever Christianized. A pattern of later Christianization is also evident in Djebel Hauran and the Ledjā. This phenomenon has evoked little sound comment.[313]

The mechanics of the process were quite different from those used with the Arab pastoralists.[314] One gets the impression, despite the fragmentary character of the evidence, that the bedouin found the acceptance of monotheistic Christianity an easier thing than

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from this incongruity that supposely "early" architectural schemes had a longer than usual life in Djebel Hauran. The local context must therefore be considered very carefully before assigning dates to monuments purely on the basis of stylistic characteristics. It is difficult to say whether the lintel inscription of St. Elijah goes with this church or another. It is quite clearly difficult to put any of these structures before 450 A.D.

[311] Littmann, PAES III A, 801^5.

[312] Cf. Irfan Shahid's very important *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century* (cited supra).

[313] Cf. Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs*, 77.

[314] Cf. supra, Ch. VIII, Sect. 2–5.

did their sedentary brethren, who worshipped a mixture of Nabataean, Aramaean, and Arabic divinities tied to ideas of rainfall and soil fertility. The Hellenized character of these cults seems to have made them harder to displace than the divinities of the migrant clans and tribes in the Syrian deserts, just as Christianity spread among the semi-nomadic Gothic Tervingi more readily than it did with the agricultural population of the empire in the third and fourth centuries.[315]

Monasticism does not seem to have developed so extensively in the Hauran and Ledjā as it did in northern Syria, and monks are in fact seldom attested in the inscriptions of southern Syria. This was not of itself vital, except that the episcopate developed rather slowly as well. The first attested bishops for the towns discussed above come rather late by the standards of most East Roman provinces. The metropolis Bostra and Dionysias-Soada in Djebel Hauran had bishops at the time of the Council of Nicaea in 325,[316] but prelates were certifiably established at Canatha-Qanawāt, Philippopolis, and Nela in Djebel Hauran only by the mid-fifth century.[317] The first known bishop of Zorava in the Ledjā comes only by 542/3, as was seen above.[318] It is difficult to know how to fit this into the scheme suggested by Sozomen that even villages in the Provincia Arabia had bishops, except to note that the cities of the Hauran and Ledjā are rather small by Mediterranean standards.[319] The establishment of the known sees c. 450 and after was synchronous with the widespread appearance of Christian inscriptions in the villages. It seems quite probable, then, that the formation of an episcopate with cultural ties to the land (e.g. Varus of Zorava, a typical Latinate Arab name of local provenance) was the critical factor involved, but the mechanisms are less clear.

For one thing, the *periodeutai* or migrant rural presbyters turn up less commonly than in the inscriptions of northern Syria. Where Christianity did appear at an early date, some peculiar or atypical local circumstance prevailed. At Caesarea Eitha (Djebel Hauran), the rallying point was a *martyrion* of St. Sergius established by some monks in 354, an extraordinarily early date for such a building and for a monastic institution in Syria generally. In the second instance, at Bosana in Djebel Hauran, the wife and friends of the village martyr St. Inos were the agents of religious change (late 4th c.).[320]

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[315] Herwig Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, tr. T.J. Dunlap (Berkeley 1989), 75–85. An important exception to this rule is the growth of Christianity in rural 3rd c. Phrygia. Cf. supra, Ch. VII, Sect. 2–3.

[316] Brünnow-Domaszewski, *Provincia Arabia* 3, 325.

[317] Brünnow-Domaszewski, *Provincia Arabia* 3, 345f.

[318] Supra, Ch. XI, Sect. 3.

[319] Jacqueline Dentzer-Feydy, "Décor architectural et developpement du Hauran dans l'Antiquité," *Hauran I/2* 261–309.

It must be confessed that it is more difficult to account for the trend to Christianity in the Hauran and Ledjā than in other districts despite the relative abundance of dated inscriptions. The old beliefs lingered everywhere until c. 550, and some villages seem to have been polytheistic even then. This condition is symptomatized by a building inscription of 439 A.D. at Bostra:[321]

> From the munificence of our Christ-loving emperor Justinian [---] (an edifice?) of the most holy metroplis was built through the efforts of the providers, Dousarios and Iovios the goldsmiths, approved men, from the public funds. In the year 434 (of the provincial era).

Both men belonged to the first Christian generation, as they both bear the names of pagan divinities, Dousarios, the Greek adjective for the Nabataean Dūsharā, and Iovios (or Iovianus in Latin), "servant of Jupiter", an archaic Latinate name of a type going out of style in the mid-sixth century. As silversmiths and civil officials the men had enjoyed successful careers. Both had been given ethnically popular names at the time of their birth to pagan families probably in the decade before 500. They, and perhaps their families, accepted Christian monotheism in the years that followed, possibly after Justinian's edict of 529 on Hellenic religion, but more probably before this, to judge from the trend to conversion in the Hauran in the first quarter of the sixth century.[322] Conversions were going on in the countryside straight on to 550, for another Dousarios turns up (with his wife Anastasia) on an inscription at Khirbet-Ader (c. 582?).[323] The inscription bears a cross and the "here lies" formula. Around 540–550 when the couple must have been born, pagans were still giving their children theophoric names. Some persons, like this Dousarios, kept their names after baptism. Other families who had received baptism gave their children self-consciously Christian names like Anastasia, an allusion to the resurrection, a distinctive feature of Christian eschatology that sharply distinguished its believers from the adherents of the old religion. It would seem that Dūsharā survived longest in the last days of polytheism in the Hauran and Ledjā, just as Artemis did in central Asia Minor and Isis along the waters of the upper Nile valley.

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[320] Supra, Ch. XI, Sect. 2.
[321] Waddington, 1916.
[322] Cf. H. Leclercq, "Haurān," DACL 6/2, 2076f.
[323] SEG 7, 943.

APPENDIX VI

THE GOD OF AUMOS AT DEIR EL-LEBEN

A temenos of the "god of Aumos" was established at present-day Deir el-Leben, atop the southern rim of the Ledjā, in 320 A.D. It was the central shrine of the two villages of Rimea and Merdochōn. Both places were ethnically Arabic and had retained their tribal organization up to this time, Rimea belonging to the Chastenōn and Merdochōn to the sons of Aud. The divinities commemorated in the inscriptions are Licinius Augustus and Sol Invictus, the latter being worshipped locally as the "Invincible Zeus Helios, the god of Aumos" (Διὸς ἀνικήτου Ἡλίου θεοῦ Αὔμου) (Waddington 2394, 2395). The temple was a large one (τὸ σ[τέγος ἐκ] θεμελίων [καὶ] τὸ πανμεγεθὲς κτίσμα) (Waddington 2393). The construction of an enclosure wall (τὸ περιβόλεον) and altar ([ὁ] βωμός) are also commemorated (Waddington 2394, 2395). Trustees (*pistoi*) of the villages handled the details of the construction, but the monies came from elsewhere, the priests Aumos and his son Amelath (προνοίᾳ Αὔμου καὶ Ἀμελάθου [ὑ]ο[ῦ] ἱερέων) (Waddington 2393). Aumos was probably the provincial high-priest of the Provincia Arabia appointed by Maximinus Daia and residing in Bostra. The god of Aumos commemorated here was quite clearly that revered by the Illyrian soldiery of the Tetrarchic period, but in the Provincia Arabia it had an earlier currency as simply the "god of Aumos" (Agraina, 213 A.D.) (Littmann, PAES III A, 793 = Waddington, 2455), so its connection with Zeus Helios may well be a late development designed to increase the prestige of the cult. Sol Invictus was thus the high-priest Aumos' god for several reasons: Tetrarchic patronage, his own adhesion to the cult, and the coincidence of his name with that of a man who was probably a Nabataean priest centuries earlier.

If the "god of Aumos" attained a wide currency as the Hellenized Sol Invictus in the fourth century, it is perhaps easier to understand the currency of the Christian cult of St. Elijah at this time and later, the prophet who rode up to heaven in a fiery chariot. Converts to Christianity might attain a similar proximity to the Highest Divinity, who was symbolically identified with the cross superimposed on the sun after Constantine's conversion story had gotten into circulation through the pen of Eusebius of Caesarea,[1] by adhering to the locally prominent cult of St. Elijah, which turns up at Zorava, Rimea, and other towns. At the latter site, a Christian inscription reads: "Elijah (cross) conquers! His *tychē* (cross) conquers the world (cross)!" (Waddington 2425). The Constantinian victory formula and his vision of the cross in the sun are here woven together with Elijah's ascent. It perhaps recalls the image of Constantine's *consecratio* or apotheosis after his death. A medallion depicts him wearing a funeral shroud and rising to heaven in a four-horsed chariot, but he is greeted by the human hand of Christ reaching downward from a cloud in a posture of acceptance, a significant substitute for the fiery ball of the sun and its associations with the solar henotheism of the Tetrarchic period.[2]

This, and the discussion of the epigraphy in the preceding chapter, make Henri Leclercq's assertion that all polytheism had disappeared from the Hauran after Constantine's victory over Licinius seem a bit peculiar: "Le concile de Nicée est de l'année 325: dès lors toute trace de paganisme disparait dans la region."[3] Quite obviously the cult of the "god of Aumos" will have persisted beyond the limits of the epigraphic evidence, for one can hardly expect the priesthood to have vanished after only five years along with the habits of mind associated with the cult. It is perhaps worth noting that the *duumviri* of Bostra built or repaired the temenos of an unnamed god in 320/1 (Waddington 1910), and also that the temple treasurers of Damascus raised an honorific inscription and perhaps a statue to Julian the Apostate *prior* to his having become sole Augustus at the end of 361 (καίσαρι Ἰουλιαν[ῷ ἐπὶ ἱερο]ταμιῶν) (Waddington, 2551a). It is uncertain if these were the officials of the famous temple of Zeus or of some other shrine. (Cf. Waddington, 2549).

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[1] Alföldy, *Conversion of Constantine*, 61ff.

[2] Cf. Richard Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals: Topography and Politics* (Berkeley 1983), 64ff.

[3] Henri Leclercq, "Hauran," DACL 6/2, 2072.

APPENDIX VII

TEMPLE CONVERSIONS AND THE SURVIVAL OF CULTS IN THE EARLY SIXTH CENTURY

A review of Waddington's collection brought additional evidence to light that is entirely consistent with the previous discussion about sixth-century temple conversions and the survival of cult in Djebel Hauran and the Ledjā.

The first instance concerns Busr el-Hariri, which lies some 10 km. directly east of Zorava in the Ledjā. The descendants of an otherwise unattested Praetorian Prefect named Maiorinus were quite prominent there in the later fifth and early sixth centuries.[1] A well preserved funerary inscription composed in Epic verse commemorates his career in a small church (Waddington 2474), as do two inscriptions on the "great church" of the site (Waddington 2475, 2476). Of significance is another inscription yet which commemorates the foundation of a church of St. Sergius, as it implies a temple conversion. The date is 517/8 (Waddington 2477):

> (Cross) Flavius Chrysaphios built the church of St. Sergius because of the admonition of his brother Elias the *rationalis* of blessed memory, and of Evangelos the presbyter, who offered him the undesired building that was in this place before, along with the apses and revetting. In consequence, it (or "he") lies in this place.
>
> Under the superintendancy of Elias the archdeacon, of the family of Maiorinus. In the year 412 of the province. In the eleventh year of the indiction. (= 1 Sept. 517–21 March 518)

The crucial phrase is "the undesired building that was in this place before" (τὸ πρὶν ἔνθα ἀπόθητον), an evident euphemism for a pagan temple.[2] The presbyter apparently gave away a site (προσφέροντος) that had come into the hands of the church in recent years. Flavius Chrysaphios' deceased brother had enjoined him to build the church "out of admonition" (ἐξ ὑποβωλῆς (sic)), a peculiar phrase when one considers that the village or *kōmopolis* already had two churches. The temple of an unnamed god evidently existed at Busr el-Hariri, but no one had come forward with the funds necessary to demolish or modify the eyesore until Elias seemingly made this dying request. The monies evidently came out of the latter's heritable property.

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[1] See the lists of Praetorian Prefects in Venance Grumel, *Traité d'études byzantines I: La chronologie* (Paris 1958), 367–72. Cf. L. Robert, *Hellenica* 11–12 (1960), 302–5.

[2] Waddington observes: "Les mots . . . indiquent sans doute que l'église a été bâtie sur l'emplacement d'un temple païen."

It is quite possible that the temple was not demolished, for while the inscription affirms that Fl. Chrysaphios built the church (ἔκτισεν τὸν ναόν), it adds that he built it "with apses and revetting" (μετὰ ἀψίδων καὶ πλακώσεως). The work may only have entailed knocking out walls to add the apses for the altar, reliquary, and *diakonikon*, and furnishing the interior suitably with cut marble slabs.

Whatever the case, a temple conversion at this time would have been consistent with events taking place at Zorava, where a temple of Theandrites was demolished to make way for an octagonal *martyrion* in 515.[3] The ecclesiastical structure at Busr el-Hariri was well established by 517/8. The archdeacon Elias was evidently a subordinate of bishop Varus of Zorava or his predecessor. The resident presbyter Evangelos will have celebrated the Christian liturgy in the churches. This Elias will have been as well the heir apparent to the succession of the see of Zorava.

An important and pious Christian family, that of Maiorinus, was on the scene in the later fifth century. Its estates were evidently in Busr el-Hariri. Their influence was perhaps of critical significance for shifting the religious allegiances of the southern Ledjā in the direction of Christianity, and of having a bishop installed at Zorava. They will have formed a close association with John and Theodore, both of them decurions of Zorava, who seem to have converted to Christianity in the first decades of the sixth century. If these arguments be accepted, they provide an example of a secular family taking the initiative in Christianizing a locality, much as Fl. Eusebius was responsible for introducing the new religion to Dar Qita at Djebel Barisha in the Limestone Massif in the Antiochene.[4]

It would not have been surprising if pagans had continued to make sacrifice in the rural temples of Djebel Hauran in the early sixth century to judge from the evidence seen so far. There is plausible corroboration of this, depending on how one restores an inscription from Qasr el-Bir. I have been unable to discover a map reference for the site, but it seems from Waddington's notes to have lain in the vicinity of ancient Salamanestha on the eastern side of

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[3] Supra, Ch. XI, Sect. 3.

[4] Supra, Ch. X, Sect. 3.

Djebel Hauran.[5] The inscription in question was found in the ruins of a temple some 400 feet below the summit of a mountain called Djebel il-Qulēb. The inscription is badly damaged, but Waddington has restored it to read: "[X.---] son of Ascharos son of [---] consecrated the place in the year 415 (of the era of the province)" (520/1 A.D.) ([ὁ δεῖνα] Ἀσχάρο(υ) τοῦ [---) τὸν τόπον [ἀφιέρωσ]εν ἐν ἔτι υιε´) (Waddington 2095a). The whole meaning of the inscription hinges on the restoration of "he consecrated", for which only two letters are visible ([ἀφιέρωσ]εν). The late date, the seemingly non-Christian Semitic name Ascharos, the fact that the site was a temple, and the use of the word "place" (ὁ τόπος) all excite suspicion. The three-generation genealogy, as reconstructed, and the use of the provincial era in the date, have the flavor of the Safaitic inscriptions, which are very "place" oriented.[6] The other common use of that word as "tomb" seems inappropriate here, and I am inclined to accept it as a synonym for "sanctuary" in accordance with Waddington's restoration. The place was, after all, sacred to begin with.

We know a little about the *ad hoc* nature of Arab sacrifices from the Safaitic inscriptions. For example, an inscription at il-Mroshān reads in part: "And he set up a sign for Allāt" (Littmann, PAES IV C, 237). Enno Littmann, following J. Wellhausen, suggests that the "sign" was not a statue, but a stone used for an altar, a *nuṣb* or *manṣab*. Another inscription from in-Nemārah states simply: "And he sacrificed to Baal-Shamīn in piety" (or "for safety") (*wa-dabaḥ li-Ba'al-Shamīn pe waqīth*) (Littmann, PAES IV C, 925).

It would be best to suppose that any sacrifices made at Qasr el-Bir, whether made to Dūsharā or some other divinity, were of an informal nature, and that agriculturalists and bedouin performed them in equal measure. The site was a recognized place for such cultic acts, and it must have had a fair amount of traffic in the first quarter of the sixth century.

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[5] Butler, PAES II A, 336.

[6] Littmann, PAES IV C, 407, 872. For a different reading, cf. Littmann, PAES III A, 731, and supra, p. 342f.

EPILOGUE

The foregoing discussion has sought to demonstrate any number of propositions about the decline of Hellenic religion and the Christianization of the Eastern Roman Empire between c. 370–529. Some of these conclusions might have been easily deduced from a reading of primary sources like the Theodosian Code, fifth-century ecclesiastical historians, hagiographies, and the like, but the rest has been derived from a vast body of disparate evidence by what might be called "empirical" method. This principle applies not only to the organization and comparison of texts and material evidence, but also to its interpretation in contexts local and regional. Various old assumptions about the question of religious transition in Late Antiquity were not so much disproved as brushed aside during the process of assembling the evidence and giving shape to its interpretation. It seems appropriate to make a brief concluding statement.

The sacrifice remained the defining characteristic of the old Hellenic polytheism between 370–529. This is the universal verdict of the edicts of the Christian emperors, and is also the viewpoint expressed by the few pagan writers who address it like Libanius and Marinus of Neapolis, and by the personal testimony of the men who made offerings to their gods and cut inscriptions in memory of that fact, as at Philae in upper Egypt (mid-5th c.) and in Mt. Lebanon where a dated altar (*bōmos*) was erected in 540 A.D. It was practically inevitable that this should go on so long as the emperors allowed Roman citizens to worship freely according to conscience and conviction. The periodic claims of emperors like Theodosius II that pagans no longer lived in the Christian *oikoumene*, or of churchmen like Theodoret of Cyrrhus that the memory of the "falsely-named gods" along with their altars and temples had ceased to exist, reflected a very narrow view of the cultural and demographic character of the provinces. The persistence of sacrifice was admittedly a declining phenomenon, but was significant enough to cause Justinian to include two undated edicts (probably published c. 481–488 by the emperor Zeno) into the second edition of the *Codex Iustinianus* in 534.

Thereafter sacrifice drifted into the tradition of "popular" religion in both "pagan" and Christianized form, as we learn from a variety of sources.[1] Nikolaos, the hegumen of Hagia Sion (ob. 565) celebrated Christian variants of sacrifice outside the chapels of rural Lycia on many occasions, but other illegal sacrifices are attested as late as the ninth century.[2] And there were the folkloric sacrifices that persisted in Neohellenic and Turkish custom until recent times.[3] The wholesale adaptation of Hellenic liturgies and litanies to Christian usage became an important feature of early medieval Christianity, and sacrifices at times accompanied the acts and prayers.

It is important in all this to remember that the premodern peasant mentality was often at variance with prescribed legal and ecclesiastical norms as regards understanding and intention.[4] If at times we query the meaning of the term "pagan" in the mind of a biased Christian writer describing a calendar custom, we must admit that inquiry is seldom, if ever, possible when it comes to discovering how the agriculturalist perceived the distribution of divine and daimonic powers, and how he rationalized the use of archaic, pre-Christian rituals, when necessity seemingly dictated a departure from the norms prescribed by the village presbyter, the *periodeutēs*, or the monk. It is here that the historian must decide whether it is his task to deconstruct the ideas of Christian writers or to unravel the behavioral and cultural attitudes of a silent peasantry that are expressed only indirectly in his text. The latter is a much more elusive subject. The examples presented in this study suggest that it is indeed possible to apprehend those patterns. It must be borne in mind, however, that Late Roman "Hellenistic" religious thought and behavior was influenced by Anatolian, Arabic, Aramaean, Coptic, Iranian, and even Hebraic substrates and substructures. One must, in a sense, devise an anthropology. "Christianization", when divorced from more quantifiable subjects like demography, can never be more than a term of relative reference, like the term "pagan", unless the whole idea of historical synthesis is to be abandoned.

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[1] Frank R. Trombley, "Popular Religion," *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. A. Kazhdan *et al.*, 3 (Oxford 1991), 1698–1700.

[2] Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World," 339. Idem, "Monastic Foundations in Sixth-century Anatolia and Their Role in the Social and Economic Life of the Countryside," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 30 (1985), 58. Cf. supra, Ch. VII, Sect. Sect. 2.

[3] Speros Vryonis, "Religious Changes and Patterns in the Balkans, 14th–16th Centuries," *Aspects of the Balkans*, ed. H. Birnbaum and S. Vryonis (The Hague–Paris 1972), 174. Lawson, *Greek Folklore and Religion*, 262ff.

[4] Vividly expressed in Ginzburg, *Night Battles*, passim.

The idea can now be safely dismissed that "mass conversions" were a regular feature of Christianization. This notion was not, however, a product of the imagination of Christian zealots Late Roman and modern. There is, in fact, a demonstrable correlation between temple conversions and adhesion to Christian monotheism. The permanence of religious ideas lies in some sense in the permanence of their outward forms, that is, in scriptures, sculpture, buildings, painting, liturgical vessels, and ritual.[5] The destruction of the temples of "great gods" in Gaza, Athens, Alexandria, and Aphrodisias (viz. those of Zeus Marnas, Athena, Sarapis, and Aphrodite) led in many cases to a rejection of the old cult by its adherents. In some instances, as in Alexandria, the perceived impotence of the divinity to protect its shrine by a gigantic earthquake, coupled with the discovery of the mechanical origin of the wonders seen and felt in the Serapaeum, produced disillusion in the skeptical and religious alike, and caused a temporary rush to the churches. For Gaza, at least, we have Mark the Deacon's ostensible figures for conversions. They suggest a minor and temporary rise in the number of admissions to the catechumenate, but nothing approaching "mass conversions". At Aphrodisias, on the other hand, the repression of Illus' rebellion and the failure of the oracles' predictions about the overthrow of emperor Zeno and the restoration of public sacrifice proved damning to the old religion. In consequence, the inscriptions reflect a gradual drift to Christianity in the decurion class between c. 488–529. One could not be a skeptic and hope in the oracles at the same time. On the other hand, one could suffer the destruction of his gods and still remain a Hellene, albeit with a siege mentality, as we learn from the poetry of Palladas of Alexandria.

"Conversions" were in fact all very individualized. Political, social, and economic coercion played a role, but the testimony of Hellenists and ordinary folk alike reveal an awareness that real points of conjuncture existed between the material and divine worlds. Proclus' dream vision of Athena shortly before the closure of the Parthenon—an event he certainly anticipated in light of the political situation—served to confirm his own Hellenic faith and that of his demoralized followers after the events of 481–488. Palladas knew of a similar such experience. We learn directly from the witness of Abedrapsas; an artisan turned farmer in the village of Frikyā in the Apamene, of the social and material benefits conferred on him by his god. It all became a matter of deep conviction when the unnamed divinity ("the god of Arkesilaos") apeared to him in a waking vision. And so Abedrapsas told the story in an inscription incised on his mausoleum.[6] Visions might confirm one's Hellenic faith, but more often altered it in Late Antiquity, as the incubation narratives relate about the shrine of Sts. Kosmas and Damian in Constantinople.[7] At other times, the "miracles" of the Christian God had more of a social or material context, as a consequence of tax relief through the good offices of a monk, difficult but successful childbirth when the time-worn prayers to Artemis failed, or pagan villagers' witnessing monks' defiance of the hostile kratophanies of their gods, when Christian holy men entered the temple precincts, recited the psalmody, and then emerged unscathed. On a psychological level, "conversions" of this sort relied upon intuition rather than superstition, and on feelings of religious awe and certitude rather than on theological analysis along the lines suggested by William James.[8] The how and why of conversion will be better understood when the entire problem of Hellenic and Christian religious experience in Late Antiquity is studied in depth. Apart from E.R. Dodds' slender book on the subject, such a study remains a desideratum.[9] Research on the purely psychological side of these questions has advanced greatly since the turn of the century, but historians have been slow to acclimatize themselves to comparative method. In consequence, a rather outmoded style of "skepticism" prevails *vis à vis* ancient authors who are important witnesses to verifiable phenomena of religious experience.[10]

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[5] For discussion see: Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," *The Interpretation of Cultures* (London 1975), 89–99.

The analysis of the epigraphy of individual villages demonstrates the pace and regional character of Christianization. Such a method is much more revealing than schemes such as generalizing from sundry *a priori* and qualitative judgements about the statements of hagiographic authors.[11] The use of the epigraphy gives a high degree of corroboration to the statements of John of Ephesus that there were Hellenes and rustic pagans in all the provinces and cities of the Eastern Roman Empire.[12] The majority of villages surveyed in this volume became partly or largely Christian long before the Justinianic laws on sacrifice and legacies of 529, or at least at those sites where datable inscriptions have survived in large numbers. The evidence from northern Syria and the Provincia Arabia demonstrates that pagan villages still existed in the eastern borderlands of these provinces as late as c. 550, and that individual pagan families lived in otherwise Christian hamlets until that time as well. The "skepticism" that has greeted the reports of John of Ephesus and other sixth-century writers is, as it turns out, little more than an uncritical or hypercritical intuition. On the other hand, it is very difficult to discover signs of ongoing polytheism in the epigraphy of Asia Minor. The reasons for this most probably lie in the reuse of inscribed stones for public and private building activity where sedentary populations have survived.[13] In contrast, the bedouinization and gradual abandonment of semi-arid agriculture in the parts of Syria, Arabia, and southern Palestine during the early medieval period has left buildings and inscriptions in a surprisingly complete state of preservation.[14] The literary record for Egypt is somewhat fuller, but the epigraphy is quite disappointing except at Philae, where pagan and Christian lived in synoikism until the sixth century. While quite distant from the Mediterranean world, the site should not be dismissed as irrelevant, for after all the Isis temple was staffed by a native Egyptian priesthood that continued to make dedications in the hieroglyphic and demotic tongues in the fourth and fifth centuries, respectively. The Blemmyes would have had no cause to enter into treaty relations with the Roman state about using the shrine if the infrastructure of cult in terms of personnel, buildings, and cultic know-how had not remained in existence. At any rate, rural Egypt underwent Christianization according to a scheme fairly similar and synchronous to that taking place elsewhere in the late Hellenistic world.

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[6] Supra, Ch. X, Sect. 6.

[7] Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 4.

[8] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York 1961), 160–210. The different categories of conversion elicited in this study have not, to my knowledge, ever been seriously applied to the evidence of the Late Antique texts both Hellenic and Christian. E.R. Dodds makes only passing reference to it in *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety* (Cambridge 1965), 2, 76, 80.

[9] See previous note.

[10] I might cite here the as yet unpublished dissertation of my student Nicola J. Becky, "Aspects of Religious Experience in the Early Life of St. Theodore of Sykeon" (King's College London 1992), which has put this 7th c. text into a thoroughly comparative context that corroborates Theodore's dream-visions and compulsive religious behavior from studies on child psychology and psychoanalytic works. Publication data not yet available.

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[11] This earlier scheme was followed in Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World" and other articles, but now seems rather provisional in comparison to the present system of anaylsis.

[12] Cf. the comment of E. Rochow, "Zu einigen oppositionellen religiösen Strömungen," 231f.

[13] See for example: Cyril Mango and Ihor Ševčenko, "Three Inscriptions of the Reign of Anastasius I and Constantine V," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 65 (1972), 379f. Cf. Frank R. Trombley, "The Decline of the Seventh-Century Town: The Exception of Euchaita," *Byzantina kai Metabyzantina* 4 (1985), 65f., 72, with bibliography.

[14] J.M. Wagstaff, *The Evolution of Middle Eastern Landscapes: An Outline to A.D. 1840* (London 1985), 167f.

A continuing interest in polemics against Hellenic religion is everywhere evident in the fifth-century cities of the Roman East. It can now be said with a strong degree of assurance that Theodoret of Cyrrhus' *Therapeutic for Hellenic Maladies* was not so much a response to some sort of "Julianic revival" as it was a handbook for educated Christian clerics and sophists to use against the Hellenists. There can no longer be much doubt about the demographic importance of the pagan sophists, decurions schooled in the Greek *paideia*, and Christian Hellenists in the cities, not to mention those like Severus of Sozopolis living on the fringes of the catechumentate who sympathized with the older cultural values.[15] In practical terms, Christian prelates and educated monks like Isidore of Pelusium (ob. c. 435) had to be able to come up with arguments that were convincing in logic and form, something that the older polemical literature lacked, if they were interested in making conversions or preventing lapse into sacrifice, oracle-taking, and the rest. This explains more than anything the toils of Theodoret and those of the *philoponoi* of Alexandria. The demographic fact of there having been Hellenes in the city councils and local aristocracies is now corroborated by the inscriptions of Aphrodisias. Christian writers and the emperors as well were quite obviously not imagining that sacrifices were being secretly performed, that oracles and magic papyri were being circulated amongst the Christians of their respective venues, or that the Greek *paideia* occasionally put the religious beliefs of the latter at risk.

The relative importance of these considerations amidst the theological controversies and church administrative problems of the fifth century is difficult but not impossible to measure if one looks at the correspondence of Isidore of Pelusium, who takes all sorts of issues in hand, as for example his chiding a bishop for squeezing the poor dry in order to finance the construction of a new church, or counselling a soldier that, if he really must fight, he should go to the frontiers and fight the just war against the barbarians rather than trouble the orderly life of civil society.[16] Isidore lays a good deal of criticism at the door of the Hellenists. In one instance, he castigates the reading of Philostratus' life of Apollonius of Tyana, a work that implicitly called for the reformation and revival of pagan cult along lines again being suggested by fifth-century Neoplatonists like Proclus, who avidly collected information about bygone theologies and rituals.[17] These cultural and demographic realities have gotten less attention than they deserve towards explaining the preoccupation of Christian writers with Hellenic religion between 370–529.

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[15] Cf. supra, Ch. V, passim.

[16] Isidore of Pelusium, *Ep.* 1.37 and 1.40, PG 78, 205A–B and 208B.

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[17] Isidore of Pelusium, *Ep.* 1.398, PG 78, 405B.

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Hauran I/1-2	*Hauran I/1-2: Recherches archéologiques sur la Syrie du Sud à l'époque hellénistique et romaine.* Ed. J.-M. Dentzer (Paris 1985–86).
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ERRATA TO PART I

Page:	*Error*:	*Correction*:
5, n. 20	Antinooupolis	Antinoupolis
15, line 9	*potana*	*popana*
35, n. 136	Magic	Magie
35, n. 136	*Rhenisches*	*Rheinisches*
37, n. 146	*en Grèce et en Asie Mineure* 3/1	*de la Syrie*
44, line 24	καταχθονίοι	καταχθόνιοι
46, n. 194	cult	culte
47, n. 198	Michael	Martin
49, line 10	Serapeun	Serapeum
95, line 17	ephiphany	epiphany
105, line 11	George	John
132, line 7	devises	devices
164, line 16	Ammia	Ammias
174, line 5	tomb	tomb"
174, line 9	*herōon*	*herōion*
183, line 9	Phrygia	Pamphylia
184, line 30	Eygpt	Egypt
186, line 8	Dome	Dôme
187, line 22	delienation	delineation
205, n. 89	Labriole	Labriolle
231, line 7	νεοφωτίστοι	νεοφώτιστοι
247, n. 7	*Expedition*	*Expeditions*
248, line 21	ἐγγόνης	ἐγγόνην
251, n. 33	*Auctuarium Bibliotheca Hagiographica*	*Auctuarium Bibliothecae Hagiographicae*
261, n. 70	*Révue*	*Revue*
278, n. 139	Ernst	Ernest
304, n. 111	of Panium	[*delete*]
308, line 7	Homer and Hesiod	Euclid
311, line 17	Cherries	Cherris
312, line 18f.	of Panopolis	[*delete*]
312, n. 146	Sect. 3	Sect. 2

ADDITAMENTA TO PART I

p. 45, n. 192	Thanks to Dominic Montserrat for this suggestion.
p. 120f.	The Venasa incident predates the formation of Cappadocia II in 371.
pp. 235 and n., and 252f.	The preferred spellings are Sts. Maiour and Thea.
p. 311f.	The divinity in question seems to have been Selene rather than Athena.
p. 333, n. 3	Thanks to Jane Baun of Dumbarton Oaks for this reference.

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